

EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY;

OR,

THE HISTORY OF
LADY ST. LAURENCE.

A NOVEL.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.

EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY;



LADY VISCOUNTESS FAIRFORD

MADAM, I HAVE THE HONOUR

THE following sheets, which are
only intended to exhibit a true picture
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11

LADY VISCOUNTESS FAIRFORD.

Madam,

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If

If your Ladyship approves of this little work, it may be introduced into the world with singular propriety, by a character that unites the most polished manners, and cultivated understanding, with all that is amiable and respectable in virtue; and that is equally fitted to adorn a Court, and to give dignity and grace to Rural Life.

I am, Madam,

Your Ladyship's

Most obedient, humble servant,



MARCH,

1787.

THE AUTHOR.

EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY.

NOVEL.

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

MISS JULIA OSBORN.

Eggerton-Hall, August 1, 1785.

I UNDERSTAND by yesterday's post, that I shall very soon congratulate my dear sister on her marriage with Lord St. Laurence, as my father informs me all terms are agreed on be-

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B

tween

THE AUTHOR

tween the Earl of C***** and himself.

That you will be happy I have not the least doubt; and I most truly thank you for your choice; as, neither Sir George nor myself could have found amongst all our acquaintance a more amiable man.

But are not you very precipitate? scarcely met a month, yet determine upon so serious a matter as an union for life! However, I can account for this haste from my amiable father's desire to see us both happy; and if he insures your felicity as truly as he has done mine, you need not repine at the precipitation. As you have never been in town, your first winter will pass in seeing



ing and being seen ; and afterwards, if you are like Cecilia, you will find the society of a few friends, well chosen, preferable to all the noise and nonsense of the gay world, as it is very improperly called. Now I know your dear little head is running on just what I, with all the gravity of an old dowager, am telling you is not worth your notice. You will judge for yourself. From your rank and situation indeed you will be obliged to enter the vortex of fashionable life ; in which, though I will not attempt to lead, yet, now and then, I will endeavour to guide you with a little advice. You know I have the right of an elder sister, and have often

presumed on that circumstance. Pray write, and let me know how your heart is engaged in this match. Sir George says, the man who once gains entire possession of it, if he has but good sense, never needs fear the loss of his empire. I have wrote by this post to our father, therefore accept Sir George's and my best wishes for your future happiness; and believe me, my dear Julia,

Your affectionate sister,

CECILIA EGGERTON.

LORD

LORD ST. LAURENCE

THE HON. HENRY DILLON.

Laurel Vale, August 2, 1785.

REJOICE with me, my friend, on my near approach to the summit of my wishes. My father has consented, though not without a degree of hauteur, to my union with Miss Osborn. The lovely Julia, too, has this morning consented to give me her hand. I know I shall incur the laugh of half the clubs in town, most of the members of which endeavour to bring inconstancy into a system, and in this detestable pursuit

meet with too much success. I shall not attempt to defend myself, but leave you to follow your own course, as I shall follow mine. Why should we not? since the attainment of happiness is the object of both, though the means by which we seek to accomplish it be indeed very different. If you chuse to be present, and see me in the act of renouncing the world, as you call it, order your chaise immediately, and I will ensure you a very polite welcome from Mr. Osborn.—Thursday next is the appointed day. You know Lady Cecilia Eggerton, who will also be here. Perhaps you might get a seat in her coach: manage the matter as best pleases yourself,

yourself, only be here, if possible. I would wish to attend you on a similar occasion. Julia has no mother living. Mr. Osborn being determined never to take a second wife, very good humouredly says, that hearing wives of the present day exclaimed against, and once having met with a good one, for her sake he will never alter his opinion of the sex. I hope Lady St. Laurence will make her sister her model of imitation: she is really the most elegant and, at the same time, most amiable woman I know. I cannot conceive it possible for any being to be happier than Eggerton, although I intend to dispute the palm with him ere long.

I know you will curse us both for a pair of stupid dogs, and are heartily tired with my matrimonial epistle.

So adieu, yours,

ST. LAURENCE.

MISS

MISS JULIA OSBORN

TO

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON.

Laurel Vale, August 10, 1785.

WHAT a difficulty has my sister thrown in my way when she wishes truly to be informed of the state of my *heart*! You know that I am on the eve of marriage, and that *ought* to determine the point in question. Tell Sir George I thank him for his good opinion of its constancy.

To your advice and guidance I commit myself. As to your other question, of why the match was concluded so

suddenly, it was my dear father's express desire, if I did not find any reasonable objection, that it should immediately take place. As I admire Lord St. Laurence on account of his amiable dispositions, my heart readily assents to a parent's choice; and I do not believe I could have made so good a one for myself. It is an awful change, and, as one of the greatest revolutions in life, I meet it with some anxiety and apprehension. How would our good mother exult at this moment, were she alive! As you have ever done, I expect, my Cecilia, that you will supply her place on Thursday next. Our father is younger by ten years, and I don't yet despair

2

of

of a mother in law, if he could be prevailed on to lay aside his sable garb: and he flatters me with hopes that on Thursday, it may be more than probable, that he will fulfil my wishes. My best compliments to your good man: tell him he will never be forgiven by either my father or myself, unless he attend you to the Vale. Embrace my little Julia, and believe me, with all good wishes,

Your friend and sister,

JULIA OSBORN.

THE HON. HENRY DILLON
TO
LORD ST. LAURENCE.

August 12.

"Come see rural felicity, which love and innocence
ever enjoy."

NO faith, I will e'en stay here. The invitation is too full of sweets.—Had there been but the smallest shadow of a difficulty, or an intrigue, I had been with you in a trice. I will be introduced to the blushing bride in my own meridian, London, dear London, in which I was born to shine with distinction. The women would absolutely break their hearts should I escape from them only for a week. Where is that lovely fellow, Dillon? would re-echo
from

from St. James's to St. George's. I alarmed a whole circle yesterday evening with the bare idea of my absence: "*positively* you *shent* go," said a dozen of the loveliest women in Christendom. They were amazed when I mentioned your marriage. Your old flame, Lady Susan Drayton, said, she was happy to hear you had at last found a lady who answered your ideas of conjugal happiness; and she had no doubt of seeing the golden age revived in your family at least. She has an humble friend who writes poetry, and, if possible, will get an Epithalamium ready against your arrival. I think in one of your former letters you mention your intended is

without

without coquetry—she will acquire it, I will answer for her. However, we all congratulate you on being arrived at the very highest pitch of stupidity and dulness. If I don't forget, you wished to attend me on a similar occasion: that will never be in your power; for if Fate, in her most mischievous moment, should destine me to wear the matrimonial fetters, it must be no sooner thought of than accomplished: for I would marry as I would fight a duel, and would not wish to be at a certainty of either, four hours before it happened. I would not with so long notice of the former, lest my variable disposition should change. But indeed there is

no

no necessity, on my part, of any such precaution; for where is the woman that can ensnare me? She must possess all the various attractions of her sex, and then, faith, I could not promise that my love should be of

“That dignity, as to go hand in hand even

“With the vow I made her in marriage.”

I think you once recommended one of those old tabbies your aunts. I cannot turn knight-errant in their service, for they would be apt to pronounce the fatal—yes, almost before the question had passed my own lips, and then, I should detest her, were she, instead of an antiquated virgin, an angel. I do not yet despair of seeing you, and yours
that

that is to be, as fashionable a pair as any in London. Your wife will be the admiration of the whole town, as I understand she is handsome, and indeed, if she was not, as novelty is our sole directress in matters of taste, she is certain of her day: this being past, she must give way to some other divinity. Lady Charlotte Mayne is our present goddess, and well worthy she is of adoration. She came fresh from the mint of fashion, having spent three years in Italy, and the last winter in Paris, from which place Mayne married her.—Excuse me, I ought to be at Kensington. Ever yours,

DILLON.

WIL-

WILLIAM OSBORN, ESQ.

TO

MISS JULIA OSBORN.

Laurel Vale, Aug. 14. 1785.

My dear child,

AT this time, when the fate of your future life is so soon to be determined, I am constrained, by the ties of nature and duty, to take up the pen, in tender caution, as I know youth is apt to be too florid in its expectations, at the entrance into a state that can admit of no cold medium, but must be either very happy or very miserable, according to the tenour of conduct observed in its progress. I have experienced in the
 society

society of your mother, as much felicity as the matrimonial state ever conferred. In justice to her memory I must say that, in the course of near forty years, (for so long we lived together) the only pang she ever gave me, was that which I felt for her loss. Keep her image ever in your mind, and you cannot err. Do not, my dear girl, suppose that I doubt the goodness of your heart: I know it inherits all the matchless virtues of your deceased parent: but, as you are deprived of her advice, and are entering into a world, that exhibits many specious deceits, excuse a father's anxious care for your future peace.

Let

Let the domestic duties ever be attended to, in preference to the levities of the *gay* and *fashionable world*, for in these two epithets are comprehended more vices and miseries than I am able to name. I do not mean that you are to confine yourself in your own house always. No ! society has claims that cannot be dispensed with : only let home be the place you reflect on with pleasure, when abroad. Teach your domestics, by your treatment of them, to look up to you as a friend and protectress, rather than to fear you as a severe mistress. Should your lord's temper be ruffled, never seek to know the cause, unless he chuses to communicate it to you ; but endeavour
to

to soothe and dissipate his uneasiness: for indeed, my dear, I am sorry to tell you that in the present times, it requires after marriage, a more nice attention to retain the affections of a husband, than ever it did before to fix those of a lover. St. Evremond's maxims, though I do not entirely approve of them, yet may perhaps be necessary in the conduct of some wives. In order to ensure constancy, says that writer, it requires "sense, address, spirit. A woman thinks she has nothing to do but to be submissive, fond, mild, even tempered, and faithful; so far, indeed, she judges right, that these qualities should be the foundation of her character;

“ racter ; they will secure our esteem :

“ but valuable as they are, if not season-

“ ed with a spice of humour and caprice,

“ they will suffer the flame to languish

“ for want of air, and a certain weariness

“ and languor to remain : mortal

“ poisons to the best constituted hearts.”

As to humour and caprice, they are dangerous weapons, unless used by a woman of an excellent understanding, which I know you possess. I will therefore only say, that as you have ever discharged the duties of a daughter faithfully, I have the greatest reason to trust that you will also perform those of a wife : in which character I hope

to

to see both my children happy; and
ever, as now, to sign myself,

Your fond and affectionate father,

WILLIAM OSBORN.

LADY

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

SIR GEORGE EGGERTON.

Laurel Vale, Aug. 16, 1785.

I CAN assure you I am a little jealous of you; for at the Vale, when my carriage stopped, before any congratulations to me, on my arrival, my father, sister, and, in short, all the family exclaimed, "Where is Sir George?" Not even my assurance, that your own very particular business kept you away, could reconcile them to your absence.

The Vale is in high bloom, and the whole family look just as they did three years

years ago, on a similar occasion. May my sister, as many years hence, reflect on this occasion with as much pleasure, as your Cecilia does on that. Tomorrow we all attend her to church. The Earl was for having the ceremony performed in the house, but my dear father will not lay aside, he says, the good old custom of going to the parish church. Surely he will be very melancholy when Julia leaves him. His disposition is rather of a serious cast, and were it not for his library, and his fondness for study, the country must be often tedious to him. Could not you contrive to spend a month here? He would take it as a compliment, and I should, if possible,

possible, love you more than at present. If I should obtain your permission to discharge a debt I owe to the best of parents, who has ever studied my ease and happiness, and whose declining years want a thousand delicate attentions, that youth is often too apt to neglect. We cannot expect my sister will, if inclined, be able to return to the Vale before next year.—I hope we shall all meet then. Lord St. Laurence desired me to assure you, there is no man he is more ambitious of calling brother than yourself, and added some very pretty compliments to me; and as I have not acquired a sufficient stock of vanity to make my own eulogy, I shall

leave you to conjecture what they were. We stay here only two days. The sight of every room and walk, about this place, serves to remind me of scenes of past delight. The Earl of C***, and his sisters, the Lady Howards, make us a little ceremonious. They seem greatly to admire my sister. The earl, as well as the ladies, have that kind of pride which keeps every one from approaching them without those external marks of homage, which they consider as due to their rank. I admire Lord St. Laurence, who happily unites ease with dignity of manners. He has a tenderness, both of look and manner, that I am sure would endear him to

almost any woman, and adores Julia, as a little divinity. There are just arrived, a most superb set of diamonds, presented by the Earl: a pair of bracelets, by Lady Anne: and a pair of shoe-buckles, of immense value, by Lady Mary; so that we shall not want ornament. I shall not conclude this till after the wedding is over, as I mean it to serve until we meet, as a kind of journal of what is going on here; and with you were present, as indeed I ever do. My father has just looked in upon me, and we have been talking over my sister's prospects, whilst she has been amusing her future lord, and his family, with a specimen of her musical talents, which,

you know, are incomparable. They are just now returning from the music-room: I must therefore conclude, in order to join them at supper; after which, I shall have no time to write, as we shall rise with the lark, and, no doubt, we shall to-night go to rest with him too: therefore adieu, my dear George.

I have just retired from the general joy, to say I have seen Julia united to St. Laurence:—you know I hate formal descriptions of weddings. The ceremony was performed, as you may naturally suppose, by good old Mordaunt, whose natural good sense, and warmth of affection, abundantly supplied the want of conversancy with the great and fashion-

fashionable world, and expressed themselves in such a sincerely polite, and respectful demeanour, as engaged the goodwill of the earl and all his family. There is a damp on my sister's countenance I am at a loss to account for; it is not observable to the company, but I, who have, from our infancy, been used to share in either her happiness, or uneasiness, easily see it, hidden as it were, but transiently breaking through the smile upon her countenance. Perhaps her change of situation has produced this effect. It must be so, for if she had disliked the union, she was at liberty to express her disapprobation, and decline it.

It was as I before thought, for not being assured that I was right, I laid down my pen, joined the company, who were walking in the shrubbery, and had the good fortune to disengage Julia from our friends a moment, and asked her the cause of the shade I saw, or thought I saw, on her countenance. She did not deny that her spirits were a little disconcerted, but solemnly assured me, that this was the effect of weak nerves, and not of any dislike of the engagement into which she had entered, as she was perfectly happy, which relieved me from all my anxiety. We are just now going to dress for dinner, therefore you must excuse me if I

con-

conclude this hastily, as I would wish to do honour to the day, and be equipped in my best attire. This is not the fashion, but Lady Mary, who is eminently fond of state, requested of my sister to let her preside as mistress of the ceremonies, a title we could all dispense with; but she must have her humour, therefore adieu, my dear George.

Yours affectionately,

C. EGGERTON.

LADY ST. LAURENCE

TO

MISS MORDAUNT.

Laurel Vale, Aug. 18, 1785.

DO not let the change of name frighten you: the friendship of your Julia knows not any; but glows as warm as ever. The days we have spent together will ever rise in my remembrance, and would reproach me, were I capable of neglect. Happy days! May our succeeding ones but answer them, and our lives will pass in one uninterrupted scene of felicity.

To-

To-morrow, my dear Mary, I leave the Vale. I cannot even write this sentence without shedding tears. Glad should I have been had you been permitted to return home that you might have been present at my marriage: but I hope your father will spare you a few months in the winter. As neither you nor I have ever seen the gay metropolis, I would wish to share the pleasure of novelty with you. We have ever attended each other in our country diversions, and I am not certain if we shall, on experiencing those of the town, find them superior: but as we are neither of us fond of moralizing, I shall only say, that the best way to determine this

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point, is experience. As you never saw my lord, let me say, that he is a most amiable man; and I beg a place in your esteem for him. Indeed, my dear Mary, I regret that fortune has not placed you in a situation where your many amiable qualities might shine conspicuously. But as your friend has been favoured by the blind goddess, you must let me supply her inattention, until she finds her way to you. I have enclosed a bill for two hundred pounds (I see your blushes at this moment, for well I know your little heart is as proud as if it knew itself in possession of an imperial crown): a journey to London creates such innumerable wants, that,
were

were I in your situation, and you in mine, I would with pleasure accept this trifle. I have told my lord that I have given an invitation to you, as an old friend, to pass the winter with me. He begs me to give his compliments, though unknown, and to join his request with mine, to your father and aunt, to spare you as soon as possible. Cecilia is with us at the Vale, as you will suppose.

I am greatly out of spirits this evening, having just taken leave of our neighbours and tenants, who this day dined here for the purpose; they are this moment gone; the poor women all in tears, and the men pouring bles-

sings on your Julia and her lord. My father led me, after dinner, to the parlour, where they sat, and said, "Well, my friends, you are going to lose your young mistress."—His voice faltered as he spoke the last word, and he left the room immediately. Hardly was I able to speak to them; but there was more eloquence in the dead silence that reigned on this occasion, than in all the speeches that could have been made by a Cicero. Our good Mrs. White led me out, otherwise I really believe I should have fainted. Cecilia went to them, and made an apology for my not appearing again; but I understand that to-morrow morning they all assemble

on

on the lawn to see us depart. I could well dispense with this proof of their affection, but I cannot request them not to appear. I will write again very soon, till which time, accept my best wishes, and believe me

Your friend,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LORD

LORD ST. LAURENCE
TO
THE HON. HENRY DILLON.

Laurel Vale, Aug. 18.

Dear Harry,

I Now present myself to the ridicule of yourself and friends, in the character of "Benedict, the married man." Yesterday morning gave me this title, which I am infinitely proud of. At present, there is not a chance of your imitating the example of your friend. I should be angry at your jesting with the amiable qualities of my Julia, did I not know your natural disposition: That to be out of the fashion would be with you, to be

out

out of the world. As it is the *ton* to explode every thing serious and rational, from the circles you frequent, I will give you all free liberty to entertain yourselves at my expence. Pray make my compliments to Lady Susan Drayton: tell her that I hope, when I have revived Arcadia in my family, her ladyship will turn shepherdess, and I will endeavour to find her a Corydon. For the epithalamium I also thank her, but I think her friend would do better to reserve it until she herself may have occasion for it. For yourself, you say “you do not despair of seeing us as fashionable a pair as any in London.” Indeed, Harry, I did not marry a wife
for

for her beauty only, that the world might come and gaze. Lady St. Laurence has beauty indeed, in its highest perfection, being blended with elegance, sensibility, and simplicity of manners. But see her and judge. She, I hope, will not enter too fashionably into the town modes; and if not, every enjoyment that constitutes her happiness, will always make a part of mine. We leave the Vale to-morrow. We shall only stop one night at my father's, and then, on the next evening, I hope you will meet us in Portland Place. I suppose it will be eight o'clock ere we arrive. You ought to take every line I write as the greatest compliment, for Julia is
finging

singing a divine air to my father, in the next room, therefore if this is not wrote correctly, you must blame the Syren that will not let me attend to you. I think you have rejected my aunts: I shall not call you out on that account, so rest quiet. You will do me the favour to present my respects to all friends, and believe me

Always yours,

ST. LAURENCE.

THE

THE HON. HENRY DILLON

SIR WILLIAM MAYNE.

Berkley Square, Aug. 20, 1785.

Dear Sir WILLIAM,

I HAVE long intended myself the honour of paying Lady Charlotte and yourself a visit at Haddington, and now will take an opportunity of waiting on you on Wednesday next. Pray tell Lady Charlotte I shall meet the bride tomorrow evening, at Portland Place, and that I will then bring her a very faithful account of every thing. I have just
received

received a letter from St. Laurence, who leads me to expect much, from his description of her,—but brides are always angelic beings. I hope her ladyship will not be angry with me, I do not mean to say that they ever descend from their celestialships to mere mortals, though faith I am much mistaken if they would be contented only to receive the worship of a divinity. Nothing but a visit to you could make the country tolerable, but her ladyship carries a court with her wherever she goes. I believe, Mayne, you are the most envied man about town. I have a summons to attend Lady Susan Drayton to the theatre. By the bye, I am rather
tired

tired of my service there. Can't you get somebody to take her off my hands? She hath "out-lived my liking," yet is a charming woman; but I am whimsical, and cannot account for caprice; and so adieu,

Yours,

DILLON.

LADY

LADY CHARLOTTE MAYNE

TO

LADY SUSAN DRAYTON.

Haddington Hall, Aug. 23, 1783.

POSITIVELY, my dear Lady Susan, I am devoured with *Ennui*. I can't think what people of fashion do with country houses, unless it be to make a nursery: or to confine a daughter in it, who happens to grow too old to be seen abroad with one's self. My mother kept me confined in an old antiquated castle, until she got a second husband; by which event I was restored to my liberty, to seek for a mate also. Whilst in confinement,

finement, I was never suffered to pass the old draw-bridge, only on a Sunday, to church : and, once a year, the Rector and his lady, and their three plump daughters, came to dine. The girls durst neither look nor speak more than, "Yes, my lady," or, "No, my lady." I verily believe they came with their eyes shut, for never did I see the colour of them. If an unexpected rap came at the gate, it alarmed the family as much as the approach of an enemy to an unfortified town. Dogs, parrots, monkeys, turkeys, peacocks, and geese, gave the signal, and the whole family was in arms. It pleased heaven to release me ; but even the name of the country

has

has given me the spleen ever since. Why I should suffer my elegant figure to be carried down to the family mansion-house, just like a new piece of furniture, I cannot imagine. To be sure, the place is well enough, but there are no Operas, no Ranelaghs, no Routs, and, to sum up all, there are no pretty fellows, to put one in a good humour with one's self.—Apropos, Sir William informs me, your *Cicisbeo*, Dillon, arrives to-morrow evening. He will serve to *badinage* with an hour or two very well. Don't be jealous, I have no design upon him; I am married, you know; however, I long impatiently for his arrival, as he promises to bring me

an

an account of Lady St. Laurence, a country miss, I think, whose only concert has been the cawing of rooks.

What a pity he did not carry her over to Paris, to take off a little of the rust of the horrid country before he introduced her in London! I shall like vastly to see the strange figure she will cut, on her first introduction into life. I thank God, a few years on the Continent have made me quite another creature. You don't know how to enjoy life, in this stupid country.

Dear Italy and France, for a woman of my spirit: but, as I must remain in England, I will live after my own way, I am determined; and never, from this time, will I advance farther into the
country

country than Kensington Gardens, whither my four little creatures of ponies can whisk me, in ten minutes. Pray write in compassion, and let me know all the news, for I am almost dead. Sir William is for ever abroad after those horrid diversions, hunting and shooting. To-morrow I receive the compliments of all the Hottentots for ten miles round us. Heaven preserve me from such an inundation of barbarism. In my next, if I escape with life, you shall be acquainted with my good neighbours.

Adieu, ma chere amie,

CHARLOTTE MAYNE.

VOL. I.

D

LADY

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

TO

WILLIAM OSBORN, ESQ.

Upper Brook-Street, Aug. 21, 1785.

I HOPE, before this reaches my dear father, that he has reconciled himself to the loss of Julia. I never left you so out of spirits. Why would you not take a journey to town with us? Sir George and myself would have endeavoured to have made your time pass tolerably agreeable. Lord St. Laurence, and my sister too, would both have been made happy by your making a visit to them; but I am more unfortunate

fortunate that you should reside chiefly with us, as I know you would not like the round of company in which they must necessarily be involved. With me, you could have lived at ease. We spent the first part of the day rather dully, after our parting with you; though forced to make efforts to be gay, as the Earl and the ladies endeavoured to amuse us, until we came to the Castle, where, my dear sir, you would have been happy to have witnessed our reception. As I was delighted with the sight of this, so, I doubt not, you also will be pleased with a description of it. At the last town before we reached the Castle, we were met by the Earl's coach and six,

which I fancy was a new one, and the ladies' chariot, the servants, and horses, decorated with a profusion of white and silver ribbands. At the inn where we alighted, were all the tenants, in their best dresses, and white cockades. The Earl and the ladies who, you know, are ceremony itself, seemed to look at us, and say, "See the grandeur of your alliance with us." We only left our travelling coaches to be marshalled out in a proper manner, when Lady Mary still presided, as at the Vale. She placed St. Laurence and Julia, myself and the Earl, in the state coach, and Lady Anne and herself, in their own. The tenants on horseback, to the amount of near two hundred, rode before the coach.

The

The ladies followed after, and the servants' baggage, &c. after them. In this state we proceeded to the village, where the bells were ringing, and bonfires burning, and every thing seemed to unite in the general joy. At the gate which leads to the Porter's Lodge we were met by fifty girls, who, according to ancient custom, were to strew flowers through the Park to the Castle. But as we were expected two hours sooner, and twilight came on, this rather lost its effect. This ceremony had been observed thirty years before, at the marriage of the Earl. However, we were amply compensated for losing the beauty of the young women, by the illumination of the Castle and village. I have

not seen a more beautiful spectacle than the avenue presented, lighted with variegated lamps, and the servants with flambeaux. On our alighting, the Earl and St. Laurence led my sister and myself into a room, the most elegant I ever saw. They left us a moment to assist the ladies, who, on their entrance, very cordially embraced my sister, as also did the Earl, and welcomed us to the Castle. After a cup of coffee, we were ushered into the saloon, where there was a most delightful concert; and after this, a very superb supper, fit for an eastern monarch. The next morning, we were escorted by the same cavalcade, all but the little flower damsels, twenty miles on our way to London, when

when the Earl and ladies returned, and left us to pursue our way uninterrupted. Although all this was very fine, we were much happier that it was over. I have just left my sister in Portland Place, and am sitting by Sir George, scribbling, in order to amuse you, if possible. My little Julia says, she will come and supply the place of her aunt, if you please. Let us know that you are well, which will always contribute to the happiness of,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate

GEORGE and C—. EGGERTON.

D 4

MISS

MISS MORDAUNT

LADY ST. LAURENCE.

The Vicarage, Aug. 25, 1785.

IS it not hard that I, whose wishes lead me to be the first to offer my congratulations, should, for the present, be deprived of that satisfaction, by the illness of my aunt? however, let my pen offer the warmest wishes of my heart, for a long, long continuance of your present happiness. Thanks to my dear Julia (for so you must still allow me to call you) for her delicate attention to my limited fortune. But, at the same time, let me assure you, that from no

heard

one

one but yourself would I accept such a present. My poor father's slender finances put it out of my power to feel the exquisite delight of making others happy. You well know how we used to exult when children, in making a purse of a few shillings to relieve poor Selby's widow, which we have often done, and stole back in as much fear of detection, as if we had done a fault in going there, although, had we known it, our excellent parents would have applauded, not checked, our liberality. I see the poor creature frequently now, but alas ! it is only to weep with her, at the relation of miseries I cannot relieve. About three weeks ago, as I passed by her door, I

D 5

heard

heard her crying violently, and immediately went in to inquire the cause. I found the poor woman on her knees, and her eldest girl in the same posture, to two horrid looking wretches, intreating them to wait until the next day, and not to send them to a prison that night, of which they took no more notice than if she had been praying to the wall. On my demanding to be informed what was the matter, one of them said, “Why, look ye, madam, this here woman owes us nothing, but her husband did our client, twenty pounds; and if so be that he his dead, it is fit that our plaintiff should have his money from his wife. He drank the liquor, and she

“she must pay, or march to prison.
 “This here man and I are sheriff’s of-
 “ficers, and must take her away.” I
 endeavoured to expostulate with them,
 and the poor woman said, my dear chil-
 dren, must they go to prison also? “No,
 “no, mistress, we don’t want them,”
 said the unfeeling wretch, “nor you
 “neither, if you can pay us, or if this
 “gentlewoman will for you.” “I am
 “sorry it is not in my power,” said I;
 “if it was, you should not insult the
 “unhappy woman.” “Why then,
 “what signifies waiting here, wasting
 “our time? so pray, mistress, come
 “along.” The children clung round
 her, and the men pushed them away,

saying, "Don't bawl here, you devils." How did I wish for my friend! however, I entreated the fellows to take my word that they should be paid. "But when?" asked they; "In three weeks," I answered. "Well, madam, if you will pay the expences of the action, why I will let the woman at liberty." I had no more than three guineas in my pocket, which they took, and this morning called on me for the remainder; which my Julia's bounty enabled me to discharge: and to shew you I am not too proud to accept a favour, when your letter came to hand I was just writing to you, in order to tell poor Selby's dreadful story, and to request your assistance

ance

THE

ance to discharge the obligation I had entered into for her, as I durst not have hinted such a thing to my aunt. I will wait on you as soon as possible; in the mean time, I beg you will present my respectful compliments to Lady Cecilia, and your lord, to whom I return thanks also for his invitation. All your friends in this part of the country beg to congratulate you. Poor Selby, when she mentioned your marriage, said, she knew you was born to be a great lady, and God in heaven bless and preserve you, and yours, for ever; in which simple, but sincere prayer, let me join, and subscribe myself always,

Your obliged, and affectionate friend,

MARY MORDAUNT.

T H E

THE HON. HENRY DILLON,

THE HON. FRANCIS GREVILLE.

Haddington Hall, Sept. 10, 1785.

WHY was not you at home when I called on Wednesday evening? I was in violent spirits, having just been conversing with one of the most lovely women in the creation, I mean Lady St. Laurence. Now, you will stupidly say, "Well, and what then? she is the wife of your friend." No, Frank, in matters of the heart, I have no friend but my own inclination, and the dear creature at whose shrine I bow. Don't, therefore, on any account, attempt to

I persuade

persuade me that I am not to pursue my own course. I could no more sit down, like you cool deliberate fellows, and reason myself out of love, than I could hang or shoot myself, if my charmer proved cruel, and rejected my suit,—a misfortune, by the bye, which I never experienced yet, and trust, that the fair St. Laurence will not be the first to alter my opinion of the charming sex. It will be a glorious pursuit. I foresee difficulty, which, with me, enhances its value. I do wish she belonged to some one else, to be sure; but, as it is, why St. Laurence must not take it amiss, having married a charming woman, if other men think as well of her as himself,

self, and try to be thought well of in their turn. Besides, I think this is a compliment to his taste. You will, doubtless, wonder why, with all this admiration, I have left town.—That is easily explained too. I wish I could find a congenial soul that needed not so many explanations. I have been introduced to Lady St. Laurence, as a particular friend of her lord. If, in that character, I am constantly at her house, and on all their parties, she will learn to expect me as she does her brother and sister Eggerton, and, as she is at present fond of her husband, all my attentions will be thrown away. No! I will keep out of town a few weeks, until the turtles have
laid

laid aside billing and cooing, and reason shall have taken its turn to reign; then, if I succeed not at last, say I have lost the art of *intrigue*. How to accomplish my wishes, I know not. It will be time enough to think of that afterwards; —at present, Lady Charlotte Mayne is a divinity, and I shall devote a week or two to her. These married men are obliged to us for taking their wives off their hands; for, tired of them they are, I am sure, after a very short time: otherwise, their neglect I cannot account for. This treatment, a woman of any spirit cannot brook. In such circumstances, a little attention, well-timed, is of infinite use to us younger brothers.

brothers. Mayne, for instance, married for love; yet, if possible, he would never spend six hours together with Lady Charlotte. Yesterday evening, when I arrived, he was abroad dining with a neighbouring 'squire, and her ladyship amusing herself with reading the last new novel, which she extolled, and declared that the French only should write such books, as no other nation had any notion of plot and intrigue: a very good hint to improve on, and to endeavour to place ourselves on a level with our neighbours on the Continent. If women will study to render themselves agreeable, it is but just in us to reward them. I would not hunt

with

with Mayne, that I might acquire the good opinion of her ladyship; and, as I had taken care last night to express my fondness for the chace, my self-denial will appear a greater compliment.

I gave but a so so account of Lady St. Laurence, for it is impossible to praise any one of them without incurring the hatred of the whole sex. Besides, they never praise one another, unless, at the same time, they themselves conspicuously possess the very quality or accomplishment for which they are celebrating their friend. I have studied them well, and ought to be rewarded for my labour. To say the truth, they are not
ungrateful.

ungrateful. Let me have a letter, but no sermonizing. I must go and entertain my fair hostess, who is just now walking before my window with that same novel I before mentioned, which is to act as a reproach to me for allowing her so vilely to mispend her time. The hint is taken, my dear lady I attend. "Woman born to be controll'd—
"stoops to the forward and the bold."
Observe that, and improve upon it.

Adieu, Frank,

Yours,

DILLON.

LADY

LADY ST. LAURENCE

TO

WILLIAM OSBORN, ESQ.

Portland Place, Oct. 10, 1785.

I HOPE my dear father does not blame his Julia for neglect, in not writing yesterday. Cecilia sent me word that she wrote on the day of our arrival, I therefore waited a day or two in hopes that, in that time, I might find something in this new scene which would entertain you, and beguile a tedious moment. I have not forgot Laurel Vale, nor what I owe to the best of fathers, who has always so affectionately studied my happiness.

My

My time has mostly been spent in introduction and congratulation, and in giving orders to different tradespeople; for I am to be as fine as a little queen next Thursday, and on that day to be presented; as it is not the etiquette to visit until that ceremony is performed. Lady Mary is to attend me, and Sir George Egerton, my Lord. How happy should I be, if you, sir, could have been prevailed on to make one of the party; but I had forgot you are tired of courts, while my head is running on nothing else. My house is a little palace. I have not yet seen one of my own sex I could attach myself to, as a friend; they all seem very amiable, and
profess

profess great esteem for me, and I am ungrateful not to feel the same for them. Five or six ladies offered to introduce me to the Pantheon, Ranelagh, and indeed, every public place about town I believe was mentioned. I did not accept any of their offers, wishing first to know my Lord's opinion. Cecilia will, as usual, be my directress in matters of taste. I wish you would pass some part of the winter in town; now we are removed, I am afraid you will find it very dull. The summer we will endeavour to make as agreeable to you as possible. I have yesterday received a letter from Miss Mordaunt, who informs me, my poor pensioner, Selby's widow,

widow, with her family, have been in the utmost distress. I mention this to you, as I know your goodness of heart, which sympathizes with all in such situations, will not let this unhappy woman feel the loss of your Julia. I beg you to dispose of the inclosed fifty pounds in any manner that may be best towards forming some little subsistence for them in future. The eldest girl I shall take into the family, as soon as she is old enough. This you may tell her, and I beg Mrs. White will give her some instructions for that purpose. My sister and Sir George spend the day with us. My Lord begs me to say that the Earl expects you to spend a few days at

Castle

Castle Howard in the course of next week, and if possible we shall endeavour to meet you, if only for one night ; how good is this in my lord to anticipate my wishes ! for though only separated a week, yet there is a something undescrivable which makes me anxious for our meeting. We shall be glad to know what time you fix, as our arrangements will be made accordingly ; for here I find engagements are made three months before the visit takes place. The earl and the family propose coming to town next month. Lady Mary will only stay two days just for the presentation, and return immediately. I must conclude, as my

sister's coach is at the door, with wish-
ing you to believe me truly,

Your affectionate Daughter

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LADY

LADY SUSAN DRAYTON

T O

LADY CHARLOTTE MAYNE.

St. James's Square, Oct. 12, 1785.

AND so my inamorato has stolen to the country! I never heard him mention his intention, otherwise I might have been prevailed on to have accompanied him, or rather met him; as decorum does not permit the sexes unmarried, to travel together, and one must give a little into established customs. As to your desire of my not being jealous—*Mon Dieu!* how could such an antiquated word escape

a woman of your enlarged and elegant ideas? Dillon has brought you an account of St. Laurence's prize; I suppose he is in raptures with her. As I am writing to *you* I will own the truth: she is a most lovely creature, but seems to want animation. I sent a card the day after their arrival, and immediately received a polite answer from my Lord, saying, "he would be happy to introduce me to Lady St. Laurence." Only to mortify me I know, and had not curiosity been predominant, I would not have called for some days. However, as it was, the next morning I ordered my chair and went to call on Lady Cecilia Egerton, who was,
very

very opportunely, just stepping into her chariot to go to Portland Place. I took a seat in it, and we were announced and admitted as friends without ceremony. We found her Ladyship in a most beautiful morning dress made of white satin, and trimmed with point lace; she rose up to receive me with more grace than I expected from a country damsel. After a few foolish compliments, we entered into conversation on common topics. My Lord entered, and looking with an air of exultation, seemed to say, "Well, Lady Susan, have not I got an angel, and "are not you ready to die with envy?" No, my good Lord! I was not in any

such situation, as I yet hope to have my revenge. You, Lady Charlotte, must positively assist, for this is a formidable rival, and you know our sex never allow that without attempting retaliation, or revenge, in some shape or other. St. Laurence begged I might often look in upon them. I design to do so; and accordingly I offered to attend her ladyship to all public places. She seemed to me to be afraid to assent to any thing without spouse's leave. She looked: he did not say any thing: and so the subject dropped. Pray let me know in your next, what Dillon thinks of her: I shall not condescend to ask him. Why, in the

name

name of wonder, did he leave town when this amiable pair were but just making their *entré*? He might have led my Lady about, when my Lord could not attend, in a string, as I dare say she will never be suffered to go abroad unless attended by some faithful squire: perhaps, like Fair Rosamond of old, she may have a clue at her heel, or, as is the custom in China, have bells fastened to her ancles. Don't fear, my dear lady Charlotte, we will wear off the rust in London, and save her journey to Paris until some *faux pas* renders such a tour necessary. I see you surprised: never mind that, all in good time. I heartily long to see you in your proper sphere,

E 4

London.

London. As you say, I can't think for what men can carry us to the country; however, to laugh at the barbarians is the best way to kill time.

I have just been interrupted by the entrance of Henry Osmond, and Lord Gramont, who both came from Portland Place. "Oh, Lady Susan, what a divinity!" "By heavens," said Osmond, "a woman! why she is an angel." "Happy St. Laurence!" echoed Gramont. Well, gentlemen, and what is this to me? said I; presently you will be as tired of her as you have been of other angels before. "Never, never," they both cried; "the man must want taste indeed,"

"deed, that can ever tire of looking
"on her." Do come and let us try
what we can do with this all exquisite
fair one. I have a party to the
opera, to hear the divine Mara. So
excuse me. Adieu.

SUSAN DRAYTON.

E 5

WIL-

WILLIAM OSBORN

TO

LADY ST. LAURENCE.

Laurel Vale, Oct. 15, 1785.

My dear Child,

I Received both your sifter's and your letter with pleasure, although they contained not any sentiments new, or what I might not expect from you both. When my Julia becomes a mother, and finds her utmost wishes accomplished in her children, then will she easily conceive my feelings. Deprived of a mother's care, at an age when you most wanted it, you both became,

became, if possible, objects of a more tender regard to me, than if you had possessed the advantage of her as well as of my affection. I trust you have never severely, like me, felt the loss of her, who was adorned with virtues that will ever bloom in my memory, until it shall please the great Disposer of events to call me from this state of existence, and join us in an eternal union. Till that period I shall, as I have ever done, be resigned, and watch the rising virtues of my children with admiration and affection.

That you are both married to men of worth and honour, I am particularly thankful; and from your education

84 EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY,

and dispositions I have every thing to hope. Your own family is the place where your felicity will be ensured. You will remember a little poem you learned when a child, and we have admired since : the author of which says,

If solid happiness we prize,

Within our breast that jewel lies ;

And they are fools who roam.

The world has nothing to bestow :

From our own selves our joys must flow,

And that dear hut our home."

Tho' fools spurn Hymen's gentle pow'rs,

We, who improve his golden hours,

By sweet experience know,

That marriage, rightly understood,

Gives to the tender and the good

A paradise below.

Such

Such I found it, and such I trust you will also find it. Perhaps your father dwells too long on advice, and may be deemed doubtful of his Julia; indeed my love, it is not so; I have the strongest reliance on your rectitude of conduct, and will no more make you grave on such a subject. Follow the genuine dictates of your heart, and adopt your own mode of blessing, and being blessed. I shall certainly accept the invitation of the Earl of C—, and endeavour to reach Castle Howard on Sunday next, when I shall expect, with the fondest affection of a parent, the arrival of my children.

Tell

Tell your Lord he is too indulgent to the whimsies of a spoiled child, and the dotage of an old man. But I am sensible of his goodness, and you must repay your father's debt as well as your own. I wrote last post to Cecilia. Tell her I shall expect the performance of her promise, which was to spend a short time with me at the Vale. I had almost forgot your commission relative to poor Selby; I gave her ten pounds to answer present necessities, for I thought perhaps, as was the case, while I sat at home at ease, considering which way I might the best employ your generous gift, she might be experiencing the bitterness of want. When I entered

entered her house, her eldest child was crying excessively, and only answered to my inquiries, where was her mother, with her tears. A child less than her, said, "Sir, my mammy will die, "indeed, she says she must." "She shall not, my innocent," said I, "if you will "show me where she is." I followed the child up stairs, and found her very ill of a violent fever. I sent Doctor Beaumont to her, and from home, Mrs. White, who says, that some medicines and cordials the Doctor and herself have administered, have been of great service, and that the poor woman will recover.

I mention this circumstance, as I know it will give additional pleasure to

to your mind, to find that your charity came at so seasonable a time to rescue the unfortunate mother from the arms of death, and to be a support to her infant family. How might people of your rank bestow a brighter lustre round their coronets at a much cheaper rate than they pay to envelope them in mist and error, by casting their eyes around and raising modest merit from obscurity, protecting the innocent orphan, and assisting wretchedness wherever it presented itself, unaccompanied by wickedness! Such scenes as these you must daily see moving before you on the great theatre of this world. Remember me to your Lord, whom I hope to meet

meet in good health on Sunday, till
which time I bid you both adieu.
That you may continue ever as now,
to deserve the blessing of your father,
is the constant prayer of

Yours, affectionately,

W. OSBORN.

THE

90 EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY,

THE HON. HENRY DILLON

TO THE

HON. FRANCIS GREVILLE.

Haddington Hall, Oct. 15, 1785.

WELL, Frank, what are you doing in the grand sphere of attraction? What does the world say of the new *Star*? I mean the *St. Laurence*: 'tis a comet indeed, before which all the little twinklers must hide their diminished heads. She has been presented ere this time, and the *great decision of fashion* passed, without which, you know, we dare not determine as to the magnitude of her beauty were she the *fairest*

fairest daughter of Venus: And if they have not stamped *her* such, I will turn Druid, fall passionately in love with purling streams, shady groves, &c. and build myself a temple, or a cave, in some rock, from which I will never depart. I now hear you saying, why all this? they cannot take from the beauty she is really in possession of. No! but then they will take from the eclat that belongs to the man who enamours this fairest of the creation, and as I mean to be the Paris, I would have my beautiful Helen reign triumphant over hearts, but feel the influence of none but mine. You must think yourself a favoured mortal to be made acquainted with

with designs that "none but gods or
"men like gods, should be privy to."
I flatter myself that I have some discern-
ment, so don't disappoint me, as I
hope yet to be able to strike fire out of
your cold flinty disposition. You was
in love once, I think; I should like to
hear in what manner you proceeded, and
why you did not succeed. It must
have been a curious history when you
was the hero of it. Can't you give me
some idea of a sentimental courtship, as
I suppose mine must commence in that
style, and end as all sentimental, pla-
tonic, nonsensical follies do, in a
downright amour.

You will not suppose that I am just

now

now engaged in an affair of gallantry here: but could I submit to let the French bear the palm of victory from the English? No! I am determined, that in love as in war we shall contend: and victory shall be the reward. Has not a Marlborough taught them to own our supremacy in one art? and a Dillon waves the banner of Cupid in defiance in another. Inscribed on this, Cæsar's shall be my motto—

Veni, vidi, vici.

And so will I: Lady Charlotte shall not say that the French are the only nation for intrigue, as I believe I told you in my last: but you must excuse] a little

a little tautology in a man whose head and heart is so occupied. Were I not totally engaged, here are a number of pretty rustics, whom a good-natured fellow might not mispend a few hours in toying with: a farmer Preston's daughter is by much the finest girl amongst them. Shall I bring her to town for you? trust to my taste for once: I saw her in a *tête-a-tête* ramble, which her ladyship and I took over the village just to give the boors a view of high life *en passant*. The creatures stared, and seemed in a state almost of stupefaction. We deigned to enter some of their dwellings: one amongst the rest was particularly neat, and drew our

atten-

attention, which was this same farmer Preston's. The wife hurried out of the yard on our approach, to take off her every day apron, as she told us, and to call "her *latter* Sally to wait on her " ladyship; for lack-a-day, she warn't " fit to talk with great gentlefolks, but " my lady would find Sally had more " larning, as she was just come from " the bording school." And to do Sally justice, she is a most charming girl about fifteen, blushing like the morn; she curtsied and begged our excuse for the state in which we found the farm. " For," added she, " if my " father had but been informed of the " great honour intended him, he would
 " not

“not have left home.” “O lord!” said her ladyship, “child, I should have been absolutely frightened at *him*, if he is the counterpart of your *mother*, for *you* are, I am sure, the only intelligible part of this family.” She then whispered me to take notice of a most inimitable leg and foot which Sally displayed to advantage, having on a short jacket and petticoat. The girl’s blushes increased. The old woman came in to know if our honours would take a glass of elder wine of her own making. Sally said, “Fie, mother, her ladyship will not drink wine in a morning: but if she will condescend so far as to take a cup of
“coffee

“coffee in our poor cottage, I will go
“and bring it immediately.” A good
well-behaved girl, Dillon: don’t you
think so? And then, said her ladyship,
“No, my good girl; but pray how comes
“it you are so polite in this Hottentotish
“village?” The girl did not seem to
understand her, and the old woman
stared, and said, “La, my lady! that
“is not the name of our village; it is
“Haddington: sure your honour’s
“spouse was born in the parish, God
“bless him: and knows me and mine,
“though I say it. Lord, I remember
“the good dear old lady, when my
“Tommy broke his arm: how did she
“come, almost every day, her own self,

“and send her own doctor, and so she
 “did.” “Lord, mother,” said Sally,
 interrupting her, “don’t talk in that
 “manner, that won’t entertain her
 “ladyship about our nonsense.” The
 girl seemed to feel for the stupidity of
 her parent. We quitted the farm, but
 her ladyship asked Sally to make one
 at a rural ball, among the servants,
 given in honour of her birth-day.—I
 have presented you this sketch just to
 shew you that I have not pitched upon
 an absolute rustic for you. Mayne is
 much abroad, as he hunts, shoots, and
 drinks with the neighbouring ’squires.
 If it were not for me she would be as
 much neglected and as dull as Mrs.

Sullen

Sullen in the comedy. There is a little difference to be sure, for poor Sullen's *head* was not adorned so well as Sir William's is. I am as well entertained here as it is possible to be out of London: yet the charms of the country will not be able to hold me from the town more than a week, therefore write immediately, and tell me if I shall say a civil thing or two to the little wood nymph or no. I hear the found of the village minstrel, and must attend lady Charlotte, who means to look in upon her trades people and servants, as that will be a sufficient excuse for not retiring to rest with Sir William, whom she flatters me with saying I have ren-

dered more disagreeable than she once
thought he could ever appear to her.

Pray write to

Yours,

DILLON.

I have, I know, the excuse of my
Julia for not writing sooner, when I
tell her that a violent cold Sir George
caught on our journey, has converted
me into a nurse ever since; but the
moment I am myself again, by his re-
covery, I take the pen to say that I
never loved you so well as the day we
parted; you was all that I ever hoped
you, the fond, the amiable wife,
and affectionate sister. With respect

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

T O

LADY ST. LAURENCE.

Eggerton Hall, Oct. 18, 1785.

I Have, I know, the excuse of my Julia for not writing sooner, when I tell her that a violent cold Sir George caught on our journey, has converted me into a nurse ever since: but the moment I am myself again, by his recovery, I take the pen to say that I never loved you so well as the day we parted; you was all that I ever hoped to see you, the fond, the amiable wife, and affectionate sister. With respect

to serenity and quiet, I find myself already as if in another world; every object around me seems to breathe health and peace; your sister the happiest amongst them. It is indeed true that

“ ’Tis the heart that rules the varied scene,

“ Blossoms the rock and desolates the green.”

I really think myself the favourite of providence, when I look round and find such a husband, and such relatives, as I am blessed with. I have had an adventure: an adventure, you will say, and an hundred miles from the metropolis? Yes, my dear, and I will relate it as far as I know. Sir George says, that I would not have wrote this evening,

evening, but from the violent desire women possess of being communicative; very faucey that! though I do believe there is some little truth in it; and so to keep you no longer in suspense, I think you know that Sir George and myself never neglect the attendance on divine service, either in town or country, therefore yesterday we went to church, and on my taking a survey to notice all my neighbours, who were all eager to give us the sincere look of welcome, I observed the most elegant form you can imagine, in farmer Wilmot's pew, which made me take a second look, on which the stranger sat down on seeing me speak to Sir George, who bent his

eye that way obliquely, as I had begged him not to appear designedly to look; for I don't know any thing more distressing to a delicate mind than an impertinent appearance of curiosity. I waited impatiently until the sermon was ended, in hopes, that as they must pass us to go out of church, by engaging the farmer's wife in a momentary inquiry after the family, I might see more of their visitor. She stopped and curtsied; I returned the compliment, and said I was glad that Mrs. Wilmot had added so agreeable an addition to our neighbourhood; I said that I must be introduced to the young lady, and promised to call on her soon for that purpose,

on which we parted. The good farmer's wife was highly delighted with the notice of my ladyship in the face of the whole congregation. On my return home I asked Wilton if he knew who the lady at farmer Wilmot's was, and how long she had been there. I found this was the fourth Sunday she had appeared in church; that she had been down at the farm near three months, but was extremely ill when first she came there, and saw nobody but the people of the house, who declare her to be the best lady they ever knew. This would awaken any one's curiosity; I will, to-morrow, take a walk or ride to the village, and without seeming what I really am, anxious, try to

cultivate an acquaintance with this young stranger. She is unhappy, as I think I can trace in her countenance, and misfortune is ever sacred with me; if I can arrest any of its arrows, or pour balm into the wounded spirit of this unknown, I shall not be sorry she has fallen in my way, but return my most fervent thanks to the great Disposer of events, for having placed me in a situation to feel for, and also to relieve, the unhappy. I hope I am mistaken in my conjectures, and that the gloom that hangs on her brow is only that air of languor which usually accompanies the recovery from indisposition.

You

You are by this time returned from Castle Howard, and have seen our dear father; let me know what he said, how he looked, and if he thinks of visiting Eggerton Hall. I think I would not have you cultivate a strict intimacy with Lady Susan Drayton; if I am not mistaken, your lord is not over anxious that you should commence a friendship with her. You know, my dear, one must have a number of visitors, but a very few friends: in the country, where our circle of acquaintance was small, and we possessed the ardour inseparable from youthful minds, every visitant was a dear friend, and those that left us last the best. It must not be so in town, nor is it so any

where after judgment assumes her seat in our minds: we then distinguish, and fix, and on our decision depends, sometimes, our future fate, as time will bend our minds to agree with, and even to imitate, those (however we may differ from them at first) with whom we mostly live, and of whom we have a good opinion.

Sir George bids me tell you he will endeavour to get intelligence what was the colour of the ribbands, what the gown, and even the shoe-string of the stranger, and if she is fond of strong or weak tea, as these are all material points in the history of a lady. Is he not impertinent? In order to punish him, he shall not see what I have wrote, and

if

if I was not afraid of putting you out of all patience, I would not walk with him, though he is waiting for the purpose of shewing me a little temple that has been erected in our absence, just to please our little Julia, who said she would build a play-house on that very spot, on which Sir George has foolishly built a room for her. Yes, I must go, as a proof of an husband's affection ought never to go unrewarded. So adieu. Don't forget to tell your lord that I beg to be considered as his and your affectionate sister,

CECILIA EGGERTON.

LADY

110 EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY,

LADY MAYNE.

LADY SUSAN DRAYTON.

Haddington Hall, Oct. 18, 1783.

MY dear lady Susan will pardon my silence, as it takes some time in the country to be able to furnish out a letter with any thing tolerable. All my sins, I think, have been heartily punished. From such an inundation of barbarism, good heaven ever defend me! If you wish to have an idea of the last age, only come down to Haddington, and on your return you will be able to transmit to posterity, not only a faithful copy of those times, but even the most fashionable

fashionable dresses worn in Noah's ark, interspersed with some traditional anecdotes of the lives and conversation of some of its inhabitants. It is not wholly improbable but you may get a feather from the wing of the very dove that was the means of freeing those good people from their watery prison, to present to either the British Museum, or Sir Ashton Lever, for every house you enter abounds with antiquities. Nay, I am promised by the curate's wife, the very identical toasting fork on which Alfred the Great toasted the neat-herd's wife's cakes: you remember the story as related in history. Only conceive with what eclat I shall make my entry into the Metropolis, armed with a toasting

ing fork used by so great a hero. Another friend promises me a complete thumb of a mitten worn by Ethelfritha, consort to Alfred. I do not fix my heart on this second treasure, that the disappointment (which heaven avert) may not fall too heavy: however, I do not let these elegant pursuits occupy the hours too much, but lend a little of my time to instruct these, I don't know by what name to dignify them, female monsters will do I believe as well as any other, for I consider them as literally such. I have given them so delightful a description of high life, that they will break their helpmate's hearts if not allowed to see the Lions, Westminster-Abbey, the Wax-work; for to all these

these places their first visits must be made, though I have declared against the unfashionableness of all of them. I have promised to attend the Squire's lady to a masquerade, and actually intend to bring her in my *suite* to town, if spoufy can be prevailed to part with deary; the soft appellations by which they distinguish each other, even in company; though Sir William tells me that after a fox chase they are not quite so complaisant. If I could modernize this village, a task, by the way, which I despair of ever being able to perform, I might perhaps return once more to the seat of our ancestors. I shall make the experiment on Mrs. Jackson; and if I can but return her to the Squire a

wou'd-be

would be woman of fashion, it may raise my spirits and my hopes to another attempt.

Don't you wonder that, as a lady in quest of adventures, I have not once named my Squire Dillon? He attends me on all my little parties, and absolutely, if it was not for him, I should expire, as you would, with laughing to see him admiring the beauties of nature exhibited in a box-hedge and trees, cut out in the figures of lions, flying fish, dragons, and a hundred other devices, at the same time praising the inimitable taste of the contriver. The lady of the mansion directly declares it to have been all her own contrivance, and that she has often been advised to

cut

cut them down, but that they make so delightful and natural a prospect from the parlour window, she never could find in her heart. Dillon says he would go the length of kissing their fair hands if they had but gloves on, but as they are, they look so unlike what nature intended them for, that it is impossible: therefore, for fear the faucy creature should forget the respect due to our sex, I let him take mine, and we ramble together through woods and groves, which by a lover of the unadorned simplicity of nature, would be deemed delightful.

Now I have been so communicative concerning our country amusements, I expect, in return, a very long letter, giving me some idea of what is passing in

in the world of spirit and animation, for this is absolutely mere vegetation. Let me know what is now the most fashionable morning dress, for having been absent two months, were I now to appear, I should be as ridiculous a figure among the dear *bon ton*, as one of the creatures who make up the court of King Solomon in a puppet-show. Dillon talks of removing in a week or ten days, and the country will grow dull when one has lost one's beau; so I shall persuade Sir William, that if he must continue his rural sports, to allow me to quit him for a few weeks. My house is a perfect tavern. Only figure to yourself eight or ten horrid male creatures bouncing into one's drawing

room

room all over so splashed with mire, that it is not possible to distinguish the one from the other but by their voices, all in their dirty boots sitting down to dinner with the voraciousness of their companions, the hounds. A dead and happy silence prevails for a while, but by the time we come to the desert, I have the whole chase described in the most minute manner, and the merits of each horse and dog disputed with as much eagerness as if their estates depended on the determination of the important question. In the course of this elegant dispute, Dillon and my ladyship steal away to take our coffee, and ramble in the shrubbery and wood. With this last place you would be delighted.

lighted. It is situated directly behind the house, and by the thickness of its foliage, which scarcely admits the rays of the sun, even at mid-day, forms an admirable contrast with the gay and blooming appearance of the garden and shrubbery, through which, as you enter into the wood, you must pass. In this enchanting wilderness, a vista here and there opens some delightful prospect, which serves to enliven the scene, and correct the gloom it would otherwise inspire. At its furthest extent runs a most beautiful stream, on the banks of which stands a temple quite in the Gothic style, dedicated to Minerva, whose figure is placed in the entrance: and in an adjoining room there is an

excellent assortment of books which are placed so as to be ornamental as well as useful. This room is supported by six Corinthian pillars, round which the books are disposed, and between each of these are placed the portraits of several eminent authors. From this you ascend the stairs to an elegant little boudoire, furnished by my ladyship, and it shall not yield to any, not even the royal Parisian one. Dillon compliments me highly on my taste. I suppose the goddess who guards the door, would not be so complaisant could her goddessship ascend, but as she cannot, I need not fear the censures of wisdom on my folly, for no mortal who is marked by any such nonsensical solemnity, shall ever be admitted

mitted beyond the library. I have a great mind to dismiss the very appearance of it from the hall, and place a band of Cupids in her place, armed with bows and arrows. But come down with me, if ever I venture to come here again, and consult with me what is best to be done: for as neither Sir William or myself ever read more than a newspaper, or perhaps the last new play or novel, I cannot see the use of this leafy bower. I am shocked at the horrid length of this epistle and therefore will haste to conclude, and am,

My dear Lady Susan's

most faithful

CHARLOTTE MAYNE.

THE

THE HON. FREDERICK GREVILLE

TO

THE HON. HENRY DILLON.

St. James's Place, Oct. 20, 1785.

YOU proscribed sermonizing, well knowing it might be possible that I would endeavour at something like advice, to which you have given another name. I verily believe it would be labour in vain to attempt any thing of the kind, for which I am heartily sorry. However, I pray give me the hearing this once. It is a sincere mark of my friendship that I don't entirely give you up, for surely no two friends were ever greater opposites as to dis-

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G

position;

position; and had not our intimacy commenced when it did, in childhood, I am sure it never would at this period of our lives. When I left England I also left you such as I hoped to find you on my return, with this difference only, that manhood would have stamped its seal of firmness on the sprightly levity of the boy (I see you laughing, but I shall not mind that): on the contrary, I found my friend Harry Dillon, the *gay*, the *dissipated*, the *unthinking*, and the *unfeeling man of fashion*. Happy change, say you. But the happiness, as well as the propriety of this change, I very much doubt. If you would emulate a Marlborough, my friend, do it not by acts of injustice. Would *he* have

have fixed a dagger in the bosom of *his* friend? No! and as to glory, I see none: the assassins might as well boast of conquest, who enters your house in the dark and silent hour of midnight, and murders your family. Nay, I do not know but his is the least atrocious deed, as he leaves not those whom he attacks to the sting of conscience, marks for the finger of scorn to point at, objects of misery to themselves, and distress to their friends. But I forgot to whom I am writing, *a man of fashion*, to whom all these little minutiae are above his consideration. I doubt not but if this letter were handed about amongst your gay friends, they would all be offering their assistance to get me a snug

G 2

situation

situation on the lunatick establishment. I do not in general hazard myself to the triple-pointed sword of satire, but really when I look into futurity, and see what all this levity may end in, for I never can call it by any other name, I cannot be silent, and at the same time rank the actor of such scenes amongst my intimates. I believe you gay and thoughtless, led by the vanity of a handsome person, and the vile attentions of some of our demi-reps of quality, who assist more in the ruin of their own sex than ours could accomplish without them.

I am impelled to write thus gravely by having seen the object of your designed seduction, and having done so, am interested in her fate, for never was
there

there a more complete picture of all the virtues and graces united, than in the person and manner of Lady St. Laurence; a more speaking countenance cannot be imagined than hers. It seems to make a direct appeal to the heart for protection. She has a sleepy eye, which, the poet observes, speaks the melting soul, and a form that may defy the art of painting: if such a woman deviates from the path of rectitude (which I hardly believe possible) how severe must reflection recoil on her mind! would she not detest her seducer? 'Tis but a short-lived triumph: give it over. You say you are engaged in an affair of gallantry already: pursue it; you shall have none of my stale maxims

there, as I believe (pardon the expression) you only "mix with the herd of fools that went before." Don't fear to write again, for if this epistle has no effect, I will not trouble you any more, but listen silently and wonder at the loss of talents which, better employed, might have benefitted that society which it is now their labour to destroy. I am not acquainted with Lord St. Laurence, never having visited the family; if I had, your plot would not have succeeded so well: as a man of honour I could not have been privy to the seduction of my friend's wife in silence: and in that character, as the confidant even of Harry Dillon, I will be secret as the grave. You want to
 know

know my history? You would find no entertainment in it, and I should be greatly pained in the relation; however, your request shall be complied with some other time, as I have given you lecture enough to serve for one letter. I will now only reply to your offer of your rustic, that seduction was never my plan, therefore on that head I have stoical indifference enough to refuse an angel, could it be possible for one to fall in my way, armed with the whole beauty of her sex. Don't laugh at, but attend to, your friend,

FREDERIC GREVILLE.

THOMAS JOHNSON

TO

JOHN GREY.

I RITES just to quant u we ar to com to
 Lonnon agen nixt weeke. O Lord, John,
 i dos wishe moartaly i wer a gret mon,
 Mi Marster hes so rar a tim ont wee
 the ladis—Gentle Fox says he is a
 Shitshifbeyo. Tho i am onli a Walle
 dey Shambel, i hes a littel fun wee the
 Gals two: but then the be in lov wee
 won, an its unporfabel to ride ons falf
 off the Gades; i do wondur how
 Marster maneges thum fin Fox. two
 be fure i dos git to his leters somtims to
 se wat the wil be at, but Devil noes
 himselfe

himselfe that, thers so vaste a much
 aboute nonsensicals stuf and outland-
 eish wordes. We hed a Bal on Ledy
 Sharlots Birth Dey an i did danse til u
 mit a rung mi shurt wee such a pritte
 Gal, Marster sed if so be I would Loup
 we hir he wod giv mony an fit us up
 in a shope. i hev a gret moind to cort
 mis Preson, i am a Farmers sun as wel
 as shee, an so i shal begin to bete hup
 hir quortors tomoro, for I am tird of
 sarvic gret folkes heve gotten so mane
 tantrarums now a deys, i shal lick a
 good wif veri muche i hops to give u
 a bit a dinir no mor at presunt frome
 youre best friende

THOMAS JOHNSON.

LADY ST. LAURENCE

TO

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON.

Eggerton-Hall, Oct. 20, 1785.

My dear Sister,

I WAS very sorry to hear of Sir George's indisposition. I congratulate you on his recovery, and beg you to tell him that his sex sometimes descend from their dignity into frivolity, as well as we poor females. I most impatiently wait the arrival of your letter, from other motives than mere curiosity. And now I will answer your question, as to our good father. He looks not so well as I could wish, and complains sometimes of a faintness, which greatly alarms me. As his health has been, in general,

general, pretty good, any rude attack at his time of life might prove fatal. I expressed my anxiety, which I could not help; he said I did wrong, as it was not my place to arraign the will of Providence, as he himself looked forward to more permanent enjoyments than this world can afford, and he hoped when death should come, he should meet its stroke with the firmness of a man, who had seen all his views accomplished, and whose life had passed in endeavouring to live for the use of his fellow creatures, as well as himself. With this I was greatly affected; on which my lord and he endeavoured to turn the discourse. You had hardly time to see the beauties of Castle Howard.

It is really a most charming place, and has an extremely romantic appearance : but this is a delightful time of year, and that in which the country appears in its greatest glory. Though I have heard my father say, there is more grandeur in a winter, than a summer or autumnal scene ; I own I delight most in the luxuriant beauties of nature : and this sweet place, which now commands an unbounded prospect of fruitful fields, for near twenty miles round, interspersed with villages, cottages, and farm-houses at small distances, presents a most beautiful landscape. The Castle, which is ancient, adds to the beauty of this enchanting scene. For the venerable air of an old house

house affects me much more deeply than the elegance of a modern one. It seems to breathe something of that generous spirit of hospitality, by which we find our ancestors characterized. The earl and the ladies, I am sure, bear the same spirit of ancientry with the mansion. One should not jest with one's relations, otherwise I should say, that I really often think of the Spectator, who says, that some one, whose name I do not recollect, looked like an old picture stepped out of its frame. The comparison is very just, for they sit surrounded by family pictures, from whom they differ only in life and motion; their dress and attitudes are exactly the same. Lady Mary, at this moment,

moment, has on the very same kind of lappeted head that her great aunt wears in the picture over the door in the drawing-room. I really believe it is the same she put to the painter in, and has descended with the estate to the Earl, who has made it a present to his sister. You must not be angry with my little remarks on these good people; but as they are continually railing at the present modes, surely I may laugh at the past. Lady Mary was shocked the day I was presented, at the boldness of the young men, and the forwardness of the women. She does not go often to Court, otherwise she certainly would reprove their levity, both of dress and manners. You, it seems, have the good luck to
 please

please her. The modesty and decorum of your comportment, she says, ought to be imitated by me. I told her Ladyship that I had endeavoured to copy after you, but that, like all copyists, I should ever fall short of the original. I will tell you a very good anecdote of this same maiden aunt. The morning we were going to Court, my woman, on passing the room assigned for her Ladyship to dress in, heard her scolding Mrs. Green in a violent manner. "Why, you wretch you," said she, "don't talk to me, but find my right shoulder."—This induced Mary to stand still a little longer: "Indeed, my Lady, I pinned it inside the curtain, when you pulled it off."—"It is impossible,

“ possible, creature ; find it me this in-
 “ stant, or I shall go distracted : I can-
 “ not appear before her Majesty to-day
 “ without it, and what will my niece
 “ think of me ? She will expect to see
 “ me come down to-morrow with only
 “ one leg.” On Mrs. Green’s casting
 her eye on the top of the bed-post, her
 Ladyship’s favourite monkey, (which
 you know attends her on all visits, and
 which I was in some expectation would
 have been presented at St. James’s with
 myself) had got this right shoulder in
 his paws, grinning at them both. “ Dear
 “ amiable creature,” exclaimed Lady
 Mary, “ he is so fond of me, that my
 “ very filken shoulder is dear to him ;—
 “ come down, my delight, and let me kiss
 “ thee

“thee for this proof of thy sincere
“attachment.” What passed after, I
don’t know, for Mary sneaked off to
my chamber to conceal her mirth, and
tell me. I was greatly surprised to
find her Ladyship had one shoulder
more prominent than the other. These
ladies, for all they despise the fashions,
I find can study good looks with the
first coquet in town, for she could have
done no more than have made a shoul-
der. I do my best to entertain you,
and shall expect impatiently the history
of the fair unknown. My Lord joins
me in every good wish for a continu-
ance of health to you both.

I am your affectionate sister,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

THE

THE HON. HENRY DILLON

TO

THE HON. FREDERIC GREVILLE.

Haddington Hall, Oct. 28, 1785.

I AGAIN tell you, hang sentiment!
Preach no more. I do not live by rule,
nor I believe shall I die by it, but whilst
I am in existence, will be free as air.
No shackles, no chains, but those of the
god of love! and those I hope not to
be confined by myself, but to have at
my command, to throw round others.
Cupid is a gentle deity: his chains are
so light, that the victim is a captive
when least suspected; and his arrows
are so finely pointed, that the wound is
deepest when it is least felt: Therefore

let

let me alone : and, as you say, wonder in silence at the superiority of my genius. If you attempt to say a sermonizing word more, I will expose you to the world, and get you admitted on that same lunatic establishment mentioned in your last. Above all, don't fail in your respect to the female sex. Demireps, say you ? they are above the narrow prejudices of education, and form a system of conduct for themselves ; heavens bless them for it ; and if they assist us in our pursuits after felicity, who shall arraign their conduct ? Not our sex, I think. I am glad to find you own the power of beauty in the fair St. Laurence, but if a word escapes you of my designs, I wear a sword, sir, that shall

shall call you to strict account. I shall be in town almost as soon as my letter, although the pretty Charlotte intreats my stay until she also removes with her fox-hunter. A very trifle would prevail on her to break through forms, and rules, and accompany me to more smiling skies, but that is not my plan.

“Here is metal more attractive.”

But your history, Frederic. I know you are fond of the pen, then take it up, and I have no doubt of being entertained: but if the task is really painful, I shall excuse you. I have received some very severe letters from Lady Susan, on my desertion, but I must endeavour to persuade her when we meet, that her charge is groundless, which
will

will be no very arduous task, for the words of the poet are well adapted to the sex.

“What we wish we easily believe.”

If you were given to ill nature I should think there was a spice of envy in your last; but if there was, I forgive you. Should you see any of our friends, tell them that I shall be amongst them by Monday evening. You must excuse this short epistle, as I am going with Lady Charlotte to bid adieu to some of her rustic neighbours, and also to some of our favourite haunts. I am obliged to affect melancholy on this occasion, and sigh as if my heart would burst: I believe it, however, to be perfectly sound.

Yours,

DILLON.

LADY

LADY SUSAN DRAYTON

TO
LADY CHARLOTTE MAYNE.

St. James's Square, Oct. 22, 1785.

TEN thousand thanks to my elegant friend, for the lively description of her colony of brutes. I think you would do well to pack up the ancients, with their whole stock of antiquities, and open a room in Pall Mall to exhibit, or sell them by auction. You have a precedent of quality, you know, to keep you in countenance, and you, no doubt, would have as many purchasers.

But to the subject, on which I have so long deferred writing, in hopes of being

being

being able to give you an account of the presentation of the St. Laurence. This great event happened last Thursday. The Court was uncommonly crowded to do honour to this illustrious beauty, to whom, from henceforward, all must bow. I reached the Drawing-room about ten minutes before the buz went round the circle, "Lady St. Laurence!" "Lady St. Laurence!" All eyes were drawn, as by the power of magnetism, to one point; and, to speak the truth, *entre nous*, a fairer they could not look on. Her dress was uncommonly brilliant and beautiful; the body of which was of the palest blue I ever saw; the train, white satin; the ornaments were baskets, made of steel and white

white ribbands, from which fell carelessly ears of wheat, intermixed with jonquil and some jessamine. The petticoat, like the train, was made of white satin, but covered with crape, festooned up, and interspersed most elegantly with these same baskets of steel. Her head was ornamented with a plume of feathers, in the middle of which were mixed ears of wheat, and her hair ornamented with brilliant pins, the finest that have been worn by any one I ever saw. An immensely large necklace of diamonds, and a row of the same, very large, joined the body to the train of her clothes. Her buckles were also of diamonds. She might have been very properly called the Queen of Diamonds, had

had she not assumed to herself the empire over hearts. It is our place now to dispute her title, and endeavour to keep the balance of power a little on our own side, and I believe that, by a combination, it may be done. Great revolutions have been effected by females. I shall endeavour to cultivate a friendship with her, and under that mask shall be able to see her disposition, and to profit by my penetration. You must be of the party; therefore dispatch Dillon to town, and come yourself, and endeavour to rival this fair one. I have met her two or three times, once at Lady Templeton's, and at other times at the Duchess of Grantham's. The men are all in raptures. There is a

vast appearance of exultation about St. Laurence, on having got such a paragon of beauty for his wife. I really believe I shall play the fool, and marry very soon, since I see 'tis only married women who now-a-days attract the notice of the men. I was told this morning that Lady Cecilia Egerton is going to Spa for a short time, on account of Sir George's health. I am heartily glad of this piece of intelligence, as it will assist our design, which I hope will prosper.

Adieu, ma chere ami,

SUSAN DRAYTON.

LADY

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

TO

LADY ST. LAURENCE.

Eggerton Hall, Nov. 5, 1785.

INDEED my dear sister gave me inexpressible concern, on account of my dear father's valuable health, but since I received hers, I have had one from him, informing me of his recovery, and that he does not now feel the smallest remains of his late indisposition. I wish you, Julia, would join me in a request I am about to make to him. Sir George being advised by his physician to try the Spa waters, we mean to set out as soon as our business in this country will permit. I am per-

H 2

suaded

suaded such a journey would be serviceable to our father, if he could be prevailed on to take it; I would endeavour, as well as Sir George, to render his being of our party as pleasant as possible, and should then leave England perfectly at ease. Do try your eloquence on this subject. I had forgot, in my solicitude for my father, that I promised to give you the history of Eliza Lennox (for that is the name of farmer Wilmot's lodger). I thought she was unhappy, poor girl. But, to proceed regularly, I went the next morning to take an airing in the chariot, and took an opportunity to call, on my return, at the farm, and found Mrs. Wilmot alone. After making inquiries about

about her visitor, she said, "My Lady,
"you are mistaken: I have no visitors.
"The young lady you saw at church
"is my lodger. Doctor Mason begged
"she might come to us, as he knew (he
"was pleased to say) that we would
"take care of her, and well she deserves
"it, I am sure: but, poor thing, she is
"so melancholy, she will soon fret her-
"self to death, I am sure."—"We must
"enliven her," said I, "bring her to
"the hall and I will divert her." "She
"does not love company, my Lady,
"but perhaps so much goodness and
"condescension as you are pleased to
"shew, will be welcome to her, poor
"dear creature. Shall I go up and tell
"her your Ladyship wants to speak

"with her?" "No, by no means, but
 "you may, if you please, give my com-
 "pliments to her, and say that I, hav-
 "ing seen her yesterday at church, and
 "thinking her a stranger here, wish to
 "see her, and to make her stay in the
 "country as agreeable as possible: and
 "that I hope she will name a day when
 "I shall call on her for the purpose of
 "spending it at the Hall." The good
 woman went up, and soon returned
 with Miss Lennox's compliments, and
 that she would wait on me, which was
 just what I wished.

The intermediate time I spent in ad-
 miring the farm-house and garden,
 which is neatness itself: You must re-
 member it. I have always, since you
 was

was here, called it Ivy farm, which name you gave it, saying it always put you in mind of Gray's Ivy-mantled tower. I had just got into the little garden, and was seated in a rustic arbour, when Eliza made her appearance. As she had some little distance to walk, I had time more particularly to observe her. Figure to yourself a woman tall and most exquisitely formed; about two and twenty; light chestnut hair in great profusion falling in careless ringlets round her face and neck; hazle eyes; beautifully arched eye-brows; and fine long thick eyelashes; an aquiline nose, and rather a small mouth, which incloses the most regular set of teeth possible to be imagined, about the size of large pearls, and

as white. A complexion fair, but rather tinged with a yellow cast, such as sickness never fails to leave on such delicate forms as hers. The rose had given place to the lily, and over the whole was diffused a look of silent resignation. She had on a white muslin gown; linen of the same; a chip hat, with a grey satin ribband tied loosely round the crown, the ends hanging carelessly on her left shoulder; a cambric cloak, with arm holes, and trimmed with the same, broad hemmed. She curtsied gracefully on her approach, and said she could not express her just sense of the honour I had done her; and though wretched, she hoped not to be found unworthy of such goodness. I

begged

begged her to consider any little civilities shewn her by me, as her right as a stranger. "Your Ladyship is too good: I have no right to expect attention. "Indeed, it is true, I am a stranger." Here she burst into tears, which I endeavoured to dry up, by an assurance that, if in need of my protection or friendship, she should freely have both. She answered, that her tears were not, as tears usually were, the effect of sorrow, but joy, to have found a heart possessed of sensibility to feel for her misfortunes; ; that my endeavours to comfort and soothe her, demanded that I should be made acquainted with her story. It is impossible to tell you how much I felt myself interested for her,

as I am certain you also, by this time are. She said that she had chosen this place for its solitude. Retirement from the world was what she had determined on, for the little time she hoped she had to remain out of the grave. I bade her not give way to such low spirits, urging that she ought to endeavour to recover her health, and return to the world, which, if it had not done justice to her worth, I doubted not had happiness in store for her. She promised that I should be made acquainted with her sad story, which she had written down, not expecting here to find any friendly bosom into which she could pour her sorrows. I saw her too much affected to press her to give me her history, either in writing,

or

on by relating it: but she herself said, that she would revise what she had written, and add a few things; and that if I would send to-morrow, it should be ready. I took my leave, after making her promise to dine with me on Sunday: therefore you, my love, must wait until I can give you farther intelligence. Affliction seems to have fallen heavy on this lovely sufferer. I fear she is consumptive, as I could often perceive a little cough, and a hectic blush on her cheek.

Do not let this story, however interesting, make you forget the former part of my letter. Sir George has had a letter from town, where many encomiums are passed on you; and I find

you are the reigning toast,—a flattering distinction, but which has ruined many a good woman: so take care of yourself, as you value your own peace, and that of

Your affectionate sister,

CECILIA EGGERTON.

HENRY DILLON

TO

LORD ST. LAURENCE.

Berkley Square.

THIS moment in high health and spirits from the country arrived in a chaise and four, Henry Dillon, to spend the winter in Berkley Square.

I can

I can hardly pardon you for not giving me a line whilst at Haddington: but as there are many allowances to be made for a man in your situation, I believe you must be forgiven. Though you were engaged, however, your friends were not, and I have had many splendid accounts of you: no, not you: I mean Lady St. Laurence, of whom Fame speaks highly indeed, and I confess very justly. You are a lucky fellow, St. Laurence. I shall expect a better introduction to her ladyship than that which you gave me on your arrival. It was indeed rather to take a farewell glance I came, than from any expectation of being received *en famille*: and so for the purpose of being ranked amongst
your

your familiar friends, I shall breakfast with you to-morrow morning. Should any engagement be in the way, John waits to bring the intelligence. I kiss her ladyship's fair hand,

And am yours,
DILLON.

LADY ST. LAURENCE

to

MISS MORDAUNT.

Portland Place, Nov. 2, 1785-

WHAT envious dæmon has a spite against me? for surely some one must, to deprive me so long of the society of my friend. Will your aunt never get better? You don't know what you are losing. As for me, I am involved in the midst of gaiety, and pleasure

sure is ever springing up under different appearances, to court my attention, inasmuch that I am really fatigued by the time I go to rest, as much as a person who labours for his daily bread. But we shall in a little time get rid of all visits of congratulation, and then be more domesticated. I have lost Cecilia: she is in the country at present, preparing for a trip to Spa, which Sir George's health makes absolutely necessary. I was in hopes of being able, with my sister's assistance, to prevail on my father to accompany them, but he will not hear of it, saying, that if the air of Norfolk will not keep him alive, he will never be indebted to foreign breezes, and that, as he has ever lived, so he will die, at home.—I assure you, Mary, you will be surprised on your coming to town, to find your friend Julia an object of general attention. I think

think they are too polite here, and might divide a little of their parade of compliment with the country, which is horribly in want of it. Julia Osborn, at a country ball, was taken notice of in common with all the rest; but Julia St. Laurence, in the drawing-room at St. James's, was stamped a beauty of the first order. My Lord says, his friends were never so fond of him as since he brought me to his house, and that two porters will be absolutely necessary: He is not a little proud of all this, I can assure you. Pray come, Mary; who knows but I may be able—with the assistance of your own charms—to get you a husband? I had this morning to breakfast a most intimate friend of my Lord's, to whom I should be happy to see you united—the Hon. Mr. Dillon. He is the youngest son of the Earl of Fitzmaurice, handsome as an angel, and
a per-

a person as elegant. I shall endeavour to describe him more particularly. His age I should think about three and twenty, rather above the middle size; fine large black eyes, very expressive, rather a brown complexion, a Roman nose, and the handsomest mouth and teeth you ever beheld. Throw over all these a fine glow of health, and you cannot but think the picture pleasing. What think you, have you any objection to the name of Dillon? if not, come to me, and it may be possible; there is but one objection, if you like each other, but it is a great one in this mercenary world,—I mean fortune: a younger brother can seldom boast of too many favours from this capricious dame, and you, she has totally neglected. However, our circle is large, and I hope has one place vacant, which you may fill. I am perfectly happy in the married

ried state, and therefore wish to see you so too. I have heard grave people say there is no one in this world that can long boast of supreme felicity: if this be so, how ought I to dread a change! for surely I have not a wish ungratified under the canopy of heaven. However, whilst I have all these blessings in possession, for heaven's sake let me enjoy them, and not refine away present pleasure in apprehension of future pain. I have no female here that I much like: with whom, I mean, I could form a friendship. In fact, this seems too busy a scene to admit of it; 'tis the silent serenity of the country which is adapted for an intercourse of this kind. There is too much ceremony in town, so, having one friend, I shall not go in search of more, but rest contented. I should be happy if you were a little nearer me; I often wish to do as we were wont; to put
on

on my hat the moment any thing struck me worth either communicating, or asking your advice about, step through the park, cross the village, and reach the parsonage, where your amiable father always greeted my arrival with a most friendly welcome. Pray make my compliments to him and your aunt, and tell them that they never esteemed me if they withhold your company. I have written to my father by this post, to use his influence with Mr. Mordaunt, and I know he has a great deal. Do nurse Mrs. Mordaunt well, otherwise I will immediately send down the whole college of physicians, the effect of which, if you are at a loss to conjecture, I refer you to Doctor Garth. However, jesting apart, she is a very valuable woman, and I heartily, on her own account, wish her recovery. I am going to make one of a party this evening to

to see Mrs. Siddons play Belvidera, and am in high expectation of being delighted, having never yet seen this incomparable actress: we ought all to pay our adoration to her, as she raises the sex, on a level I had like to have said, but mean on an eminence of superiority over these lords of the creation who would depreciate us all in their power. You must excuse me, as I have to dress, and the hour, my watch informs me, is late. Think often of, and come soon to

Your friend,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LADY

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

TO

LADY ST. LAURENCE

Eggerton-Hall, Nov. 10, 1785.

I MEASURE my sister's impatience by my own, which was very great until I was in possession of the fair Eliza's history, which, to save myself the trouble of transcribing, I inclose in her own hand-writing and words.

THE HISTORY OF ELIZA.

Your Ladyship's attention and condescension, in noticing me, claims my most unbounded gratitude and confidence. Do not withdraw your kind regard, when I request that my concealment of names may not be imputed to
any

any other than the real cause. My life is now involved in an ambiguity from which I can never clear it, but to those of sensibility and feeling, like yourself. I wish not to be known whilst I live; and after my death, would not have my history remain as a reproach to one who now thinks not of Eliza. I have assumed the name of Lennox, as my own is now hateful to me. After reading my sad story, don't conclude too harshly of one, whose easy belief and fond credulity, has, and ever will be, a continued source of unavailing sorrow to

E L I Z A.

I was born in the country, about forty miles from the Metropolis. My father was steward to the Earl of ——. Little passed worth noticing, until I was removed from school, at the age of sixteen, to live at home. Our house was
situated

situated at one of the extremities of the park belonging to this nobleman, which terminated the shrubbery, and my father being a great favourite, had an entrance from the house into it, though we never made use of this privilege when any company was at the hall. I had been at home about six months, when Mr. ——— returned from Oxford to spend some time with the Earl, his father, before he made the grand tour of Europe. On his arrival he came to visit my father, and of course, my mother and myself were called to pay our respects. Never, till that moment, had I beheld a form that was so lovely: the condescending ease and dignity with which he treated our family, served but to increase my admiration; and after he left us, my father was warm in the praise of the many amiable virtues which had been already discovered in

2

this

this youth. I wished for an opportunity of seeing and conversing with him, but knew not how to accomplish it. "He will never call on us again," (said I to myself) "until he takes his leave. This visit was meant to serve as a kind recollection of my father,—I had no share in it." After spending a most uneasy evening, the first I had ever experienced proceeding from such a cause, I determined, as the weather was fine, to get up early in the morning, and, as at this time I was not prohibited to walk in the gardens, to avail myself of this opportunity, and try if I could get a glance of this disturber of my peace. Accordingly I arose about six o'clock. Never before had I taken such pains in dressing myself. After having examined myself with a scrutinizing eye, I took one of the volumes of the Spectator in my hand, for I was now
even

even cautious that the choice of my book might be thought proper, if I should chance to see Mr. ——. The sun was just rising, and a more delightful morning I never saw. I entered the shrubbery, and with hasty steps proceeded until I came opposite the house, in the front of which was a most beautiful lawn, and piece of water. On the other side of this was the walk I was in. I walked slowly, and took out my book, but cast many a look off of it, to see if I could perceive any of the family stirring, except servants. I then entered a grove of elms, which led down to the lodge, when I heard a hasty step behind me, which proved to be Mr. ——, who congratulated me on my taste in choosing to walk at so early an hour. He had determined, he said, to walk through the garden, to breakfast with my father; but if I would permit

him he would attend me in my walk. A great deal of conversation passed, which seemed to be constrained on both sides: yet, as I have since learned, both were made happy by this interview. My tears flow as I write this, when I recollect to how much wretchedness that meeting was the prelude.— I feared my father would chide me if I returned with Mr. —, and some part of my embarrassment proceeded from that cause. But from this he soon relieved me: for when I had got nearly within sight of home, he said, if I would excuse him, he would just step to the hall, as he had forgot to leave a message for the Earl, which it was necessary that he should receive on his rising, and reach our house by way of the Park, nearly as soon as myself. This he had done, fearing just as I did, that if he should accompany me home,

I would

I would not be permitted to walk there again. I went in, anxiously expecting our guest, who came not many minutes after myself. I had not mentioned our meeting, and I gladly perceived that he also, on this subject, observed a profound silence. All this vanity placed to love—nor was I wrong in drawing this fond conclusion. I, as usual, took my morning and evening walk, if the weather permitted, and I was always, as by accident, joined by Mr. —. The Earl had the gout, therefore we were under no apprehensions on his account. You, my Lady, will blame my indiscretion. I acknowledge the justice of your censure, and therefore have submitted to my situation with greater resignation to the will of Providence, than I otherwise could have done. The scenes I have related are sunshine, but

soon did that sun set in clouds of adversity.

“Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
“Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.”

A space of two months soon elapsed, and, in the course of that time, I was perfectly convinced that I had a place in the heart of the only man I had ever wished to please. Youth, and want of thought, led me on in this pleasing delusion. All obstacles fled before my inclination; and I considered that when two hearts were united, nothing ought to oppose the union of their hands also. One evening Mr. — came to our house, and I thought looked melancholy. My father was abroad, and my mother engaged in some family affairs: and, as Mr. — was now no stranger, all ceremony was waved on both sides. He came into the parlour in which I

was

was sitting, and, after inquiring about my health, sat without speaking a word, with his eyes fixed on the fire. I inquired what was the matter, and if he was unwell? whether his head ached? and, if so, I said I would order coffee. He answered, "No, Eliza, 'tis not my head; but my heart which aches." "I am sorry for it," said I: "as for that malady it is out of my skill to find a remedy."—"You know not what you have said, at least I hope not; for, were it as you say, I were the veriest wretch breathing; but a truce with this mystic language; there was an anxiety in your look, Eliza, when you thought me in bodily pain, that prompted me to own my disease to be that of the mind. I hoped your compassion would have extended so far as to have removed that."—"And so I most readily would, if in my
I 3 "power."

“power.”—“Then indeed,” said he,
 “I am most supremely happy; for,
 “from the first moment I saw you, the
 “decision of your Henry’s (for so I
 “shall call him) future happiness or
 “misery depended entirely on you.”
 The joy this declaration had occasioned
 left me without power of utterance.
 This was the first moment that the dis-
 parity of our families and fortunes pre-
 sented itself to my recollection, and I
 immediately burst into tears.—“Good
 “heavens! it must be so, your heart
 “is pre-engaged, and I am doomed to
 “misery. I will not again offend my
 “sweet girl, by urging a passion dis-
 “agreeable to her; but will set out to-
 “morrow morning on my travels.”
 “—For heaven’s sake, Mr. —, do
 “not torture me with such an idea. I
 “have, I greatly fear, like yourself, in-
 “dulged hopes too sanguine, and the
 “knowing

“knowing ourselves to be the object
 “of each other’s regard, will but height-
 “en the distress of our situations.”—
 “And does Eliza indeed own I am
 “in any degree dear to her? my future
 “life shall be dedicated to repay her for
 “the amiable manner in which she has
 “eased my tortured imagination. Say
 “but you will be mine. Make me
 “but happy in this request, and I will
 “dispel the uneasy reflections that have
 “haunted me, from the first moment I
 “beheld my charming Eliza.”—I knew
 not what reply to make. I wished to
 dispel his uneasiness, yet a natural mo-
 desty restrained my tongue for some mo-
 ments. At length, he said, “Your silence
 “is cruel in the extreme, and to sport
 “with a passion like mine, not what I
 “should expect. ’Tis plain you have
 “other prepossessions. If I am not the
 “object of your regard, tell me so in-
 “stantly :

“stantly : for suspense is the worst, the
 “most poignant affliction.” I felt the
 force of these last words, and therefore
 answered him, that I would candidly
 own his declaration of affection was
 what most flattered me; but when I
 reflected on the distance between us,
 and the improbability of that ever being
 removed, I durst not even indulge hope.
 He caught my hand, gave me ten
 thousand thanks; and said, if that
 was my only objection, he was the
 happiest of men. My father returned,
 and we entered into general conver-
 sation. — “Well, Mr. —,” said my
 father, “I suppose when you return
 “to England again, we shall soon see
 “you married; for, as your elder bro-
 “ther is determined on a single life,
 “you must give us an heir.” “I hope
 “so,” said he, “and I now know
 “the woman, if ever I do marry.” —
 “Aye!”

"Aye!" said my father, "why you
 "are but just returned from College,
 "and there are no ladies of distinction
 "there: I hope to God it is not any
 "improper connection—You'll excuse
 "me, sir, as you know your father has
 "a great name and family to support."
 "—No, no, the object I mean would
 "rather add dignity to my name,
 "than diminish it." My father's words
 sunk deep into my heart, and shewed
 me the folly of encouraging our mutual
 passion. I left the room in tears, though
 this circumstance was happily unper-
 ceived by my father. Mr. — went
 away very soon, and I saw him from
 the window of my apartment walking
 in a very serious manner in the shrub-
 bery, before he went home. I wished
 to have joined him, and have endea-
 voured to dissuade him from what I
 then first saw in its proper light, but

durst not attempt it: for, as it was then later than I usually walked abroad, some suspicion might have arisen. I went to bed early, but could not sleep; and in the morning found myself so feverish, as made it necessary that I should not rise so early as I had been wont to do. My father and mother were greatly alarmed, and begged to send for a physician, to which I would by no means consent, well knowing that my disease was of the mind. I arose to dinner, and found myself rather better, when a little boy, whom we kept for the purpose of going on errands, called me into a back-room, and gave me the following letter:

HENRY to ELIZA.

“WHY, after your generous declaration, that I was the object of your
 “esteem, (I would say affection, and
 “hope

“hope I am not mistaken) would you
 “absent yourself from the garden this
 “morning, when I wished more, if
 “possible, for your company, than I
 “ever did before? I have spent a sleep-
 “less, but a delightful night, in project-
 “ing a thousand schemes for our union
 “and future happiness. It is indeed
 “true that we must be *secret*; but let
 “not the delicacy of Eliza start at that
 “word. I will hush every doubt that
 “may arise, and convince her that it
 “is only by the most honourable actions
 “I can dare to hope for an union with
 “her. And if she will meet me in
 “the Elm Walk this evening, between
 “six and eight, I hope to convince her
 “of the truth and sincerity of my in-
 “tentions, till which time I remain,
 “most faithfully,

Hers,

HENRY —”

This letter pleased me, as it was the first I ever received from my lover, and I heartily wished to have gone to the place, ill as I then was, to have been informed of the projects he had formed, which I wished to find practicable. But I durst not so much as mention going out of the house: I therefore wrote the following note, and sent it by the boy, who was to watch for an opportunity of delivering it to Mr.

—, unseen.

ELIZA TO HENRY.

“YOUR letter, in a few words, expressed such sentiments as were, I sincerely believe, the dictates of your heart, and which mine, with sincere gratitude, approves. But consider, fir, the last conversation you had with my father, who sees every thing through the cool medium of reason,

“and

"and not of passion. What obstacles
 "did he not then start in direct oppo-
 "sition to any plan you could propose
 "for an union with a young woman
 "like me? You deceived yourself, and
 "him, when you said that the object
 "of your affections (when I was meant)
 "would add dignity to your name.
 "Would to heaven that this were in-
 "deed the case. Eliza would then,
 "with pride, shew you, how little she
 "valued wealth and titles, in compe-
 "tition with your happiness. But the
 "daughter of your father's steward is
 "not a match ever to be approved by
 "a family like yours. Then endea-
 "vour to forget Eliza! and I hope she
 "possesses sufficient firmness of mind
 "to feel a secret satisfaction in sacri-
 "ficing her happiness to the interest of
 "the man she loves: at least she will
 "make the trial, however severe. You
 "will

" will meet with one of splendid rank
 " and fortune, who will totally oblite-
 " rate the name of Eliza from the bo-
 " som of Henry, but never with one
 " who has a more sincere regard for
 " you. Cruel fortune demands that
 " you should forget me; yet, if ever
 " in a moment of solitude, my memory
 " should intrude itself on your mind,
 " I may be permitted to demand a sigh,
 " for having become a voluntary victim
 " to an ill-fated passion: whilst, on the
 " contrary, should I listen to what are
 " the genuine dictates of my heart, and
 " unite our fates in one link, would
 " you not, after a little time, look upon
 " me as having raised my own fortune
 " on the destruction of yours? and
 " what but dislike, aversion, I may say,
 " could follow such an idea? Of all
 " misfortunes, the worst that could hap-
 " pen to me, would be that of seeing
 " the

“the husband of my sincerest affections
 “looking on me with an averted eye.
 “No, the very thought chills me, and
 “we must meet no more——

“I have spent a very different night
 “from yours. The agitation of my
 “mind has brought on a fever, which
 “was the cause why I did not this
 “morning meet you, and say, what
 “my being confined through illness
 “now obliges me to write. Consider
 “well your own situation: consider
 “mine, and pity her who would with
 “pleasure, if possible, subscribe herself
 “Your

“ELIZA.”

I sent this letter, but no sooner was
 the boy out of sight than I would have
 given worlds, if in my possession, to
 have re-called him, so various are our
 determinations where the heart has any
 share

share in mental conflicts. The agitation of my mind caused an increase of my fever, and I was obliged to go to bed. About two hours after Mr. — came to call on my father: the servant who let him in, said he looked half mad, she thought, and she feared something was not right at the hall. This greatly alarmed me, lest my letter should have been intercepted. I inquired what Mr. — said, and was told he asked for me as soon as he came in, and my mother told him I was very ill, and my father was gone to town for a physician. He did not stop, but seemed in great agitation. My father returned, and I was ordered to be kept quiet, being in a high fever. I waited impatiently for a letter, but how to get it conveyed to me, I knew not, as the boy would not be admitted to my chamber. I therefore made a
confidant

confidant of one of the maids, who brought me a letter the next morning from Mr. ——. I was rather better, but not suffered to rise.

H E N R Y T O E L I Z A.

“If you value the life of Henry, write
 “no more letters, such as this I have
 “just received.—We must meet no
 “more!—Does that appear the dictate
 “of real love. No, Eliza, I hope the
 “conflict would be too great for either
 “of us to sustain, or even to make the
 “trial. You have injured your va-
 “luable health by the bare idea. You
 “know not my disposition, else you
 “would not hold the language you do
 “in your letter. The attachment I
 “have formed, time will not alter, or,
 “if it does, it will only be felt by an
 “increase of its strength. To answer
 “your mention of my family:—it is
 “true

“ true I do not expect their consent to
 “ our union, at present, and in future,
 “ if they do not, I would not put their
 “ favour in competition with the affec-
 “ tion of Eliza. As to fortune, when I
 “ am of age, I inherit what is sufficient
 “ from my uncle, to content two hearts
 “ enamoured of each other, as ours are,
 “ and will ever, I truly believe, continue
 “ to be. I have a college friend who
 “ has just taken orders, and whom I
 “ have invited to spend a few weeks at
 “ the Hall, previous to my departure for
 “ the Continent. If Eliza will con-
 “ sent to conjoin her fate with mine,
 “ he shall unite us in our chapel: I
 “ have a key that leads to the house
 “ from the shrubbery. I ask no more
 “ until my return to England, when I
 “ shall be able to acknowledge my bride
 “ as becomes her Henry’s situation in
 “ life, and her merit. I say this that
 “ you

"you must not be alarmed at the sud-
 "denness of my proposition, and think
 "it the result of a passion less pure
 "than mine, and that this proof of disin-
 "terested regard may have its weight,
 "and plead my cause in the bosom of
 "Eliza. If then, my lovely woman,
 "you can confide in me, make me
 "happy by a line, saying you are bet-
 "ter, and will be cautious of preserv-
 "ing a life on which depends the per-
 "manent felicity, or constant misery,
 "of your Henry. Say also that you
 "consent to our union, as I propose,
 "which should not be secret had I
 "attained two years more, at which
 "time I will joyfully proclaim it to
 "the world.

"Adieu,

"Arbiter of the fate of

"HENRY."

"I fear

I fear to tire your Ladyship, but I give you these letters to shew you the apparent good disposition of the man in whom I placed a confidence; and to this letter I fatally returned a favourable answer. I recovered, and after a week had elapsed, he informed me he was in daily expectation of a summons from his father to depart, and conjured me to meet him that evening, when he would bring his friend the clergyman, whom I had seen frequently during the week he had spent at the Hall. I consented to his request, and we bribed my maid to let me out, and wait my return, though we did not say for what purpose I was going out. It was between one and two in the morning Mr. — waited, attended by the clergyman, and I was conducted, half dead with fear, to the chapel, where our hands were united; and immediately

diately after, they conducted me home, without any discovery, and returned to the Hall. I arose at break of day, after a night passed in a thousand conjectures on the event of the last night's imprudence, for which I have been so severely punished: I saw Henry in the garden walking alone, I put on my hat and joined him. Henry said he had not been in bed, and that he was coming to breakfast with his bride: I begged he would not, as the agitation of my spirits would betray us: we soon parted, as I had an unusual terror on my spirits. I agreed to meet him on the other side of the village in the evening, for conscious guilt would not let me go to the garden again with him. I went home before my father or mother arose: whilst we were at breakfast, a servant came from the Earl with orders for my father to attend him

him immediately: this did not disturb me, as he was frequently sent for to the Hall; but on his return, which was not for near two hours, I saw something more than common was in agitation. He called my mother into another parlour, and I sat all the while more dead than alive, for my apprehension soon led me to suspect myself to be the object of their consultation. My mother came out first in tears: my father after, and with a stern aspect said, "Eliza, you have ruined your father." "Good heavens, is that possible?" said I. "How, my dear sir, tell me?" "By concealing the passion of Mr. ~~Eliza~~ from me. How durst you receive the addresses of such a man?" "However all is now past, and if you have not dishonoured your parents, it is now out of your power to repeat your transgression. Answer me directly:

"rectly: Has he seduced you, my
 "child? Here I wept, and answered,
 he was incapable of such a thought.
 "Then, heaven be praised! I can sub-
 "mit to lose my place, but not the
 "honour of my child. If thou art
 "innocent, I can pity your ill-placed
 "affection: we have enough to sup-
 "port us, though we are driven in
 "disgrace from this proud family."—I
 could no longer support the generosity
 with which he treated my fault, but
 fainted in his arms. As soon as I was
 a little recovered, by the air of a win-
 dow to which I had been removed, I
 begged to be made acquainted with
 what had passed at the Hall. On his
 arrival, the Earl ordered him to the
 library, and informed him that there
 was a clandestine correspondence car-
 ried on with his privy, he supposed,
 against the honour of the family, by
 an

an intention of his son Henry to marry me. My father, astonished at the story, declared that Mr. — had never been alone with me, to his knowledge, since his return to the Hall. This incensed the Earl still more, for the gardener was called to prove that we walked an hour or two every morning in the shrubbery, and that he heard Henry and the clergyman, as he was on the other side of a quick-set hedge, mention my name, and something of marriage, but he could not hear more. And therefore it was his duty to let the Earl know what doings were going on. My poor father endeavoured to vindicate himself, but to no purpose; the Earl ordered him to make up his accounts, and take care of his daughter's honour, as he should do that of his son: and left the room, and my father, in great anger.

I was

I was happy that they had not found out that I was really married, and I was then determined, whatever might be the consequence, never to disclose that secret until Mr. ——— could do it with safety to himself. His situation then rushed upon my mind; I durst not ask my father what was determined on as to him. At that moment my attention was roused by the sound of wheels, and I saw a chaise and four pass the window: my Henry was in it; I shall never forget his look at the moment our eyes met, for the last time. It was instantaneous. I fell from my chair, and remember nothing after, until I found myself in bed, attended by my mother. She blamed me for giving way to a passion so destructive to my honour and peace of mind, but yet compassionated my situation. I ventured to ask her where they had carried

Mr. ——. She said the butler had just been to condole with my father, and to try if it was possible to soften the Earl, as he believed his declaration of my innocence; and he said that Mr. —— had been severely reprimanded by his father, and that he had begged we might not suffer from any idea his father might entertain of his indiscretion. He was ordered to be ready in half an hour to quit the Hall, and prepare to go to London, from whence, in a few days, he was to proceed on his travels. "Then I shall never see him again," said I.—Prophetic words! —I could not utter a word more, being seized with convulsions which, for four days, threatened my life; but youth, and an excellent constitution, restored me to my health,—after a few weeks I was able to walk out. The country was alarmed, and as ill stories are

are always received into every house, and gain a considerable addition as they pass through each, it was given out that I had been with child by Mr. —, and had miscarried on his being sent abroad, so that home became my only refuge from the insults of a merciless and unfeeling world. I was insulted by the visits of a few who came to condole with my mother on her misfortune. They compared my present situation, which they said, they did not doubt was innocent, with what it might have been if, instead of aspiring at what did not become me, I had confined my views, and married a man in my own station. We soon avoided such company, and my father, as the Earl would not hear of a reconciliation, made up his accounts with that family, and after having done so, found himself in possession of what would bring him in near three

hundred pounds a year, and we removed into Wales without informing any one where we were going. I had not been there more than a week when, on walking out, I was accosted by a servant in a livery I did not know, who said he was ordered by his master to watch, and deliver the packet he held in his hand unseen by any one. He said he had waited before we quitted the Park in hopes of an opportunity of executing his orders, but as he could not get one, he followed us here. He staid but to give it me and tell me this, and went immediately away. I eagerly broke the seal, and found the paper contained a letter from, and a picture of my husband, a treasure dearer than life to me, even at this moment. The letter contained what follows.

HENRY

HENRY to ELIZA.

I “Never again shall I experience a
“pang more severe, I hope, than that
“I felt in passing the house of my
“Eliza, and not being able to assure
“her of my most constant affection.
“The cruelty of my father shall never
“be forgotten by your Henry. I
“durst not own our marriage, which
“I was twice on the point of doing,
“lest he should be still more incensed
“against the object of my choice and
“sincerest affections; and as our mar-
“riage has not, my love, been cele-
“brated according to established forms,
“he might endeavour to set it aside,
“which, whilst he is unacquainted with
“it, will be out of his power, and your
“Henry will never consider the en-
“gagement but as solemnly ratified as if
“all forms and ceremonies had passed.

K 3

“A little

" A little time will dispel the mist, and
 " Eliza will be convinced of the con-
 " stancy and attachment of her Henry,
 " who will have quitted the kingdom
 " before this reaches your hand. I in-
 " close bills for five hundred pounds,
 " which I have procured of a friend,
 " and beg, when occasion requires, you
 " will use them. I have also sent a
 " present of my picture, which my
 " vanity prompts me to think of more
 " value: I wish myself in possession
 " of yours, though your image is con-
 " stantly before me. If you have not
 " disclosed to your father the secret,
 " do not, as he may blame you for
 " acting according to the genuine dic-
 " tates of true affection. It will not
 " be an intire separation, for I shall
 " constantly correspond with you, and
 " expect impatiently your answers. I
 " am so constantly attended by the
 " gentleman

" gentleman who is to travel with me,
 " and who has my father's strict orders
 " not to leave me, while in England, a
 " moment alone ; and it is by accident
 " only that I have this opportunity of
 " desiring you to keep up your spirits,
 " and look forward to more smiling
 " hours. 'Tis this which supports me
 " under the idea of departing from all
 " I hold dear on earth. Adieu, my
 " lovely wife : take particular care of
 " yourself until my return, and believe
 " me to be, with unalterable affection,

" Your

" HENRY."

This letter raised my spirits, and
 turned my thoughts to hope that all yet
 would end in happiness. But I was
 not long allowed to indulge this pleasing
 expectation : for we had not been in
 our retirement three months before my

good father was most violently attacked by a fever, which had long preyed on his spirits, and which, in a fortnight, put an end to his life. My mother grieved incessantly, and I was constantly threatened with the loss of my only surviving parent: yet I supported myself under these afflictions with tolerable patience, as I constantly received letters with accounts of the health, and also assurances of the affection, of Henry. However, at length, to complete the measure of my misfortunes, my parent paid the great debt of nature, and I was left a miserable being indeed. I wrote Henry an account of my situation, and waited impatiently for a letter, telling me what he would wish me to do, and where to remove, as I had determined to quit the place where I now resided, as it

put

put me in mind of my irreparable loss, and rendered me incapable of supporting myself under it. After I had waited for the coming of the post with anxiety, for three months, the newspapers presented me with the following paragraph, dated Paris:

"Last week was married, at the English Ambassador's Chapel, the Hon. Mr. _____ to Lady _____."

Good heavens! a thunder bolt could not have struck me with more violence. I stood without motion or recollection. At length tears came to my relief. "'Tis impossible," said I; "can he prove otherwise than faithful?"—I read the fatal paper again and again: the words were still the same. I read over all his letters—considered his conduct—there was no ex-

cuse for *him*—and nothing but complaint for me—I took my pen to write,—and then threw it down. His silence was now accounted for: He thought no longer of Eliza; and what I once wrote in a letter, before our marriage, had now come to pass. What he wrote in his first letter after our separation, I now see was meant to let me know that if he should change his mind, I had no claims to make. This was his design in mentioning the illegality of our marriage. My husband had forgot me! my parents dead! and me the cause of hastening them to the grave! All these bitter reflections conspired to distract my imagination, and rend my wounded heart. “Ill-fated wretch, that now prolongest thy miserable existence,” said I, and snatched a knife which lay open on the table, in order to rid the world and myself of a bur-

a burthen too heavy for me to bear.
—At that moment my eye caught the picture of my husband, and I let the knife drop from my hand to kiss the image of him who had deserted, and would now disown me. Happily for me, reflection came to my mind, which prevented me from the crime of suicide. I had, on the death of my parents, become mistress of about two thousand pounds. I was therefore enabled to remove to what part of the world I liked. I fixed upon the town of Huntingdon, as being at a great distance from the scene of all my woes, where I have resided more than a year :: but my health has been constantly declining, and the good Dr. Mason gave me a recommendation here, for the benefit of the air. I was not expected to live when first I came to the Farm, but am greatly recovered, through the care of

these good people, whom I design to reward in my will, it being my intention to spend in this retreat, the little time I have to live. I know not whether Mr. — (for I dare not now call him by a more tender name) is returned to England, as I never read a newspaper for fear I should be weak enough, on finding him returned, to write and reproach him for his ungenerous conduct. I have suffered enough, and really believe were I to see a letter written by that ungrateful, yet still-beloved man, I should expire. I would not see him either confirming his treachery, or endeavouring to palliate it by excuses.—'Tis enough—I am deserted and destitute, and will never make an appeal but to that God who has supported me through this vast maze of affliction, and who, I hope, will pardon my past errors, and accept
my

my sincere repentance. I do not ask punishment, but blessings for Henry: may he but be as blessed as I am wretched, and may no moment of his life to come, serve to remind him of Eliza.

Now, my dear sister, do not you feel for this poor afflicted mourner? What an unfeeling, unprincipled wretch, must that man be, who could deceive so much innocence, and forsake so much goodness and beauty! I wish I knew his real name, I would endeavour to get him hunted from society; but you must be fatigued with reading this history, and therefore, having performed my promise in transmitting it, I will now subscribe myself,

My dear sister,

Most truly yours,

C— EGGERTON.

THOMAS JOHNSON

JOHN GREY.

THIS comes John, we mi koinde
 los to u, and mi wifs, for a shur as kan
 be i be maryed, and i licks it much,
 wee com to towne as las noit, an wod
 u thinke it my marstar did arragate
 frome the indignashon of his ranck to
 tack mi wif in the veri sam chafe wee
 himsalfe, and holde conversion wee hir,
 he toke her hup sex mills ofe Hedin-
 ton Hal, she saide he wer mortale koind
 to her, an did inclos fom familier secrits
 to hir, shes vaste clos, and wonte tel a
 worde that did pas twen am, but i dos
 not moind secrits, mi busnes is enof
 for me, u was gon hout a ridin wee
 your

your marstar wen i com to call this
mornin, the ar alwis a ridin i thinke,
an sum on em wil rid to Devl i thinke
wer fuche infarnal fillies out to go, i
hent a hour to misalfe sin we rived, wee
caring latters to the fin Cort Madams
the dosent no wat tha wod be at, I
wishe i wer mong am id let um se in-
disarance as marstar call it, Marstar seys
he shal stand Godfether, do com an
tack a kup wee us, Sal wil be koind
enuf, u muste shalute her by the nam
of Missis Johnson or she wonte lick it,
i bleve Marstar hes hed twenti latters
frome Ledy dreyton sin we com, i
wundur wat thay kan hev to sey to
won a nuther, for i hete ram to ani
bodi, onli as i am maryed, wi I wod
willn li hev u to se mi wif

So no mor at presunt from

youre lovin frind

THOMAS JOHNSON.

L A D

LADY MAYNE

LADY SUSAN DRAYTON.

Haddington Hall, Nov. 20, 1785.

I HAVE the supreme felicity to inform my dear Lady Susan that I shall emerge from this dog-kennel (for it is little better) on Saturday next. I am positively devoured with spleen. You have undoubtedly seen Dillon, and he has expatiated fully on the charms of rusticity, therefore I will talk of a more important subject, the common enemy: By this time I hope you are on a footing of perfect intimacy with her Ladyship. Environ her as much as possible in the dear Beau Monde: it can hardly fail of operating to our advantage. Observe well which of the men

creatures

creatures pay her the most attention. Give her all due praise, as an elegant woman, &c. &c. not too much enlightened yet; but may be made something of. Hint also that St. Laurence married her out of vanity, but has his attachments elsewhere. Pity the poor lady, and leave them to profit by this intelligence. As to his Lordship, I will manage him; he has never seen me, and is not yet acquainted with my character of a coquet. I shall expect to meet you in Grosvenor Square on Sunday, where I expect to be in time for dinner. Engage Dillon of our party. I am made very happy by your intelligence of Lady Eggerton's being on the wing for Spa; and hope that she will not soon return to disconcert our plan. I hate such affected matron-like beings; for it is not possible for a young woman, scarcely turned
of

of five and twenty, to be sitting at home nursing her children, and reading to her husband, who, I hear, is a counterpart of herself. If she is abroad, and it should rain, he will send a servant the town over with a warmer cloak and the chair, for fear she should get cold in stepping into her carriage. He would be my torment. I should faint at any one mentioning such antediluvian fondling: but she, good soul, relates these absurdities as little elegant attentions. Don't fail to attend my arrival, as I have ten thousand important things to consult with you about. Thank my good genius, Sir William stays in the country. I fear that I shall fail in my design of transforming the 'Squire's Lady into a woman of quality, as her helpmate cannot be prevailed on to live a month without her; and she hinted to me some fears

of

of conjugal infidelity on his part, with her dairy maid, should she remove from home so long, I doubt not but she might be even with him, had she taken the journey, but there is no civilizing these brutes, so let them e'en take their own course. How very different is this good woman and me! for I would willingly leave Sir William to intrigue with all the maids in the country, rather than be deprived one week of the pleasures of dear London.

Adieu, ma chere amie,

Yours,

C. MAYNE.

MR. MORDAUNT.

LORD ST. LAURENCE.

Vicarage, Nov. 12.

My Lord,

IF I did not know that your principles, as well as your natural disposition and taste, are very different from those of most men of your rank, I should not entertain the most distant hope of being able to effect the object of this letter; which is nothing less than to prevail on Lady St. Laurence and yourself to exchange the gay pleasures of the Metropolis for the tranquil and domestic enjoyments of Laurel-Vale. I have often wondered what could be the charm that confined so many people of fashion and fortune, for the greater

greater part of the year, to London, where every thing is purchased at a double price, where there is scarcely a person that pays any homage to them but their own domestics, and a few interested tradesmen, who grin the same artificial smile to every customer, from the duke to the drayman, and the duchess to the dealer in rags. Every thing in London is at the disposal of the best bidder, and every scene is common to the crowded inhabitants with thousands. The streets, the squares, the park, the public walks; all are the property of the public. The mind takes not an interest in them, nor surveys them with that congenial satisfaction which rivers, fields, woods, and mountains afford. Even where these are not the property of the spectator, my Lord, as the rural scenes to which I would draw you, are yours, they are endeared to

to us by long habit, and play sweetly about the soul, as something akin to us, and conscious, as it were, of all the hopes and fears that have varied the face of ever-changing life. The native of the populous city, when at a far distance from home, never reflects on the place of his birth and early education, with that thrilling tenderness, mixed with pleasure and pain, which springs up in the mind of even the untutored country swain, when, in a foreign land, he muses on the haunts of his early youth; where his father's flocks alone strayed, and each hillock and tree and rill, was regarded as their own. An affinity, my Lord, is formed between the sensible heart, and the rural scenes that are familiar to our view. Though a few, a very few years must destroy for ever that temporary property which has been bestowed

flowed on me, by the generous bounty
 of my much-honoured and beloved
 patron, Mr. Osborn, yet would I not,
 for the richest benefice in any other
 county, or district in England, forsake
 this humble mansion, my little garden,
 and field, bounded by a sloping bank,
 covered with thriving trees, planted by
 my own hands, and at the foot of
 which flows a stream, into which I
 have brought a prosperous colony of
 very beautiful and delicious trout, from
 a lake in Wales, whither I went, on
 that very day when sweet Julia Os-
 born (whom I have had the honour
 both to christen and to marry) was
 born, to visit an aged uncle. Pardon,
 my good Lord, the garrulity of an old
 man, but I would not indeed leave my
 little domain, nor the house and park,
 and deer, of Laurel Vale, for that great
 living they talk of, — of St. George's,
 Hanover-

Hanover-Square. I have, six years since, and it will be seven by Easter next, lost her who was the early object of my affections, and the undivided partner of my heart, for twenty short and fleeting years. My poor sister, I fear, will soon follow my wife into the land of forgetfulness; and my daughter too, may be removed from me, and transplanted; and O! if ever that should happen, may she meet in an humbler sphere, with such an husband as her Julia has done. I may be left without any of my kindred, alone in this world: but I consider myself as related to my neighbours, to the very trees and soil of this place, where I have known much good, and much ill. I would enjoy none of these comforts and these hopes, if old age, and the loss or dispersion of my family had overtaken me in such a place as London,

where

where all think themselves in a market, and are connected only by business, plots, and a participation in the same delusive pleasures. My Lord, this strain, to a mind possessed of such sensibility as yours, will not, I hope, appear to be wild or chimerical. That there is such a thing as a passion for the country, and that therefore, there is a constant and natural interest, and animation in a country life, is evident from the violent inclination of re-visiting their mountains, which seizes the Swiss and sometimes other nations. This *maladie du pais* never afflicted the native of any city in the world. — I would farther, my Lord, on this subject, observe, that when the Great happen to die, at London, or Bath, or Spa, or at any other place at a distance from their country residence, they usually desire that their remains may be carried to

the country church yard, and their ashes mingled with those of their ancestors: as sick children turn their languid eye from the sight and the approach of strangers, and long to lay their head in their mother's bosom, or their nurse's lap. O my Lord! men are born to live, not in crowded cities, but in the country! The patriarchal life is the most suited to the dignity, and the most conducive to the happiness of man.—Indulge me farther, my good Lord, when I say that in great cities there are great temptations to vice and immorality, which as certainly lead to misery, as effects flow from their cause. Fashion is contagious, habit is irresistible. From slight and trivial accommodations to custom and fashion, in small matters, men pass on to accommodations of still higher and higher importance. They imitate the
fashions

fashions that prevail in clothes, manners, and modes of life. They pervert the order of nature in the times of food, recreation, and rest. They turn day into night, and night into day. They depart from nature in matters of taste, and at last, by a natural transition, even in matters of judgment: for the will too often leads the understanding, and taste and judgment are nearly connected, and have a mutual influence on each other. The moral principles themselves become depraved, and the still voice of conscience is then only heard when the noise and tumult of passion are laid low, and controlled by the power of affliction. Then, indeed, men quit the haunts of vice and dissipation, and retire to converse with nature, with God, and with themselves. This, my Lord, is a very serious strain: I am the rather inclined

to indulge it, that I have just returned from the Vale, where I have spent the whole day with Mr. Osborn. The general debility which has seized his frame, I think increases, and although he did not say to me that he wished to see you and Lady St. Laurence, yet if I judge rightly, he wishes it. He talked to me very much of you both, and also of Sir George and Lady Cecilia Egerton. You know he is extremely attached to the country, and to this place. He should be very sorry, he said, if he thought that, after he is gone, this house and park should fall into ruin and disrepair. It would mortify him extremely, he said, if he thought that Lord and Lady St. Laurence should, like so many people of distinction, make their principal residence in London. I enter entirely into his ideas on this subject; and those I have

have expressed in this long letter are indeed rather more his, than mine, for he expressed them all, and many more to the same purpose. O! my Lord, your Lady inherits from the best of fathers, an excessive sensibility of temper, which must be productive of exquisite happiness, or exquisite pain. A mind that reflects, like hers, every impression of nature; that beats time, and corresponds to every tone of emotion and passion of those with whom she converses; that sympathizes with the feelings of every creature that lives; a mind so susceptible of various impressions, and formed under the eye of Mr. Osborn, (and I am proud to say, of mine) according to the model of nature, in all its native simplicity and elegance, and polished by art, as far as art can improve, but not thwart and pervert nature; such a spirit cannot

long delight in the fopperies and artificialness of a life in London, without conforming to them, nor conform to them without losing that native dignity and grace which distinguished the sweet nymph of Laurel Vale. How deeply would her father, and how truly would I regret to see Julia Osborn adorned by the name and the love of Lord St. Laurence, degenerated into a modern lady of fashion, without an heart; but that is impossible; without, I shall therefore say, that exact turn of thinking and acting, which she always had, and I hope and trust still has. Eve, expelled with disgrace from the terrestrial paradise of Eden, would not be more different from the attractive majesty of Eve, before the fall, than the Lady St. Laurence, distorted by foolish and wicked practices and fashions, would be from that Lady who
is

is the subject of this officious zeal. I have ten thousand things more to say, but I will not trouble your Lordship before I have assurance in your own hand-writing, of your forgiveness for this intrusion. With my sincerest prayers for the prosperity and happiness of your good Lady and yourself, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

RICHARD MORDAUNT.

LADY ST. LAURENCE.

LADY CECILIA EGGERTON

The Retreat, Nov. 22. 2

MY dear sister will doubtless wonder when she sees this dated from a place

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the

she has never yet heard of, but I will give you an account of the place, and why I am at it.

I have been a little indisposed for some days, and therefore not able to go from home. Some engagements made it necessary for my Lord to dine abroad. He happened to mention his intention of endeavouring to find a house not far from town, in which we might spend a day or two sometimes, and enjoy the benefit of the air, unincumbered with the smoke of the town. A gentleman of the party had a small house to dispose of, and they agreed to ride the next morning to view it. My Lord was so anxious for the re-establishment of the health of your Julia, that he completed the purchase before his return, and as he bought the furniture as it stood, I removed thither
the

the next day, and named it the RETREAT. It is a most delightful spot, about sixteen miles from town, and four from Windsor. Imagine an open, and extended common, enriched by the most luxuriant foliage of nature. At its farthest extent, in the middle of an hanging wood, stands the house, and on one side a lofty ridge of hills, between which falls a cascade, which, at a distance, casts not an unpleasing, melancholy sound. The stream keeps its course through the garden, where art vies with nature for pre-eminence, and falls gently into the Thames, which is also within view of our windows. The house, which is not large, is fitted up with great taste in the cottage style, uniting perfect elegance with extreme simplicity. I am employed in making a grotto in a little rocky cavity, over-shadowed by the brown foliage of an

ancient oak, which grows by its side. I am quite delighted with the air of content that appears in the countenances of every one I meet. It puts me in mind of the Vale, and the happy hours we have passed in the country; and also of those beautiful lines, said to be written by the Princess Elizabeth, while in confinement.

"Hark to yonder milk-maid singing,

"Cheerly o'er the brimming pail;

"Cowslips all around her springing,

"Sweetly paint the golden vale.

"Never yet did courtly maiden

"Move so sprightly, look so fair,

"Never breast, with jewels laden,

"Pour'd a song so void of care."

I am sorry the season is so far advanced, but the *Retreat* will be in high bloom and beauty in the spring, and I promise myself many delightful hours

I

here,

here, uninterrupted by the bustle of the world. I am so taken up with my new situation, that I have forgot to thank you for the history of the ill-fated Eliza. I do indeed pity her extremely; for sure, never was a woman deceived under the mask of more honourable intentions. I greatly applaud her proper pride in never remonstrating with the villain. This, which is ever attendant on conscious virtue, makes her disdain to solicit a hearing. Endeavour to cheat her out of the name of this man, and we will inquire into the affair; in the mean time, pray tell her, if she will take up her abode with me, I shall be very happy, nor will I request her to mix with society, if disagreeable to her. *The Retreat* she may constantly reside in, and it will be a great inducement to my more frequent visits to the country. My

Lord has furnished me with a great number of well-chosen books, and my music is here, if she is fond of these kind of amusements. I have had but a bad account of our father's health, in a long letter written by good Mr. Mordaunt to my Lord, which has greatly alarmed me. I am quite recovered. Two or three days here have made me another creature: I shall return to town to-morrow, and expect to find a letter on my table from you, saying the amiable Eliza feels very sensible consolation in the prospect of seeing you constantly. I think nothing will so effectually alleviate her affliction, and draw her mind from too severely lamenting her hard fate, as changing the present scene, and fixing her attention to some pursuit in which the soul will not have leisure to recur to its former object. Use your influ-

ence in persuading her to make the Retreat her home. I hope Sir George's health is re-established, and that you have given over all thoughts of Spa. Kiss little Julia, and believe me

Your affectionate sister,
JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

THE HON. HENRY DILLON

TO THE

HON. FRANCIS GREVILLE.

November 24.

WHAT the devil did you run to the country the instant I came to town for? Are we ever to be in chase of each other? Could not the old fellow die without you? I had intended to introduce you to the fairest of the fair, although you knew you held a threat that might have determined a less bold fellow

fellow than me to decline doing you so great a favour. On the morning after my arrival, I went by appointment to breakfast, and found St. Laurence and her Ladyship waiting for me. 'Twas no harm to give her a little time for expectation, as I should appear with greater eclat afterwards. She arose on my entrance, and blushed when St. Laurence presented me as his particular friend. I talked some stuff of a desire to be admitted to her friendship, and we seated ourselves to breakfast. I agree with you that she is a perfect beauty, Greville.

" Her cheek disclos'd the damask rose's hue,

" The peach's bloom, the tender snow-drop's
" white :

" Her eye, all languishing, all mild to view,

" Beam'd with the heavenly concave's glossy blue,

" And loosely flow'd her auburn tresses bright."

You

You see I even grow poetical. This is a sign of love, is it not? even poetry can hardly do justice to my charmer. As soon as breakfast was over my Lord left us together, saying he had an appointment at that hour, and begged I would dine with them, and make one of a party to Drury-Lane.—A very good introduction, thought I! We then entered into a conversation on the beauties of the country, as I had just left it. I in my turn inquired her opinion of the town, which, she said, appeared quite delightful, but that as yet she had mixed very little in public amusements, her sister being from London, and her own health having not been very good for some days. She told me her Lord had the day before made a purchase, to which she was going to-morrow, situated near the banks of the Thames, and added, that she was sure my Lord would

would receive additional pleasure if I would look in upon them, as well as herself. The invitation was accepted, and I set out on Monday morning for the *Retreat*: a good novel name enough. I am glad to find she is romantic. If you would send me a few of your sentimental heroics, who knows what the *Retreat* and Henry Dillon might accomplish? The united power of these might do wonders.—This same history of yours I can never get you to relate. Now I would give you an account of any intrigue I ever entered into through all the course of my amours, which are not a few, it must be owned.

For instance, I have married my little wood nymph to my valet, aye, and brought her to town in my own chaise afterwards, which the poor fool of a husband thought a great compliment.

ment. I wanted to get rid of him, for he is horridly stupid. I should not have taken him, but being in the country with my father at the last general election, my brother begged me to oblige him by taking this clown, as his father is a principal farmer on his estate, and he had interest in the county: so, having furnished Thomas with a wife and a shop, and adorned his brows, *not with laurels*, I have done my duty by the rascal, and we shall part good friends.

I left poor Charlotte in the Penserofo, but she, kind soul, promised to shorten the tedious hours of absence as much as possible, and follow me. Was she not to be useful to my purposes in future, I cared not how long she tarried in the country. Lady Susan and I are again on excellent terms.

I have

I have this moment received a note from her to attend on Sunday in Grosvenor Square the arrival of the aforesaid Lady Charlotte, and plot precious mischief. Well, commend me to these charming angels who can share a heart amongst them without quarrelling. To say the truth, some praise is due to me, as I divide my time pretty regularly. I think myself superior to your Lovelaces, and your Littleton, with his *three women of quality at a time*. They were mere bunglers, and would own themselves so, were they living in the time of a *Dillon*. Even that high priest of intrigue, Chesterfield, would own me as his favourite pupil. Let me know if this father of yours intends to live or die. I wish he may make his exit, for I know you heartily hate him, and he must be a good for nothing fellow indeed of whom you could speak in

the

the terms I have heard you apply to him. As to your elder brother, if he does not break his neck before, he will drink himself out of this world, and then the estate will descend to an honest fellow, who will marry directly, get children to inherit it, and live for the general good of society. I think you will never be able to return the compliment in the same strain of panegyrick. I am glad to see that matrimony has not made St. Laurence look any older than he did before that event took place; for faith I have been puzzled to recognize the features of an old acquaintance, six weeks after marriage: but he is, I think, livelier than before. I shall not seal this until to-morrow, as I shall be too late for the post this evening, and also am obliged to dine with, and attend the ladies to the theatre. Excuse me until I return.

Well,

* * * *

Well, here I am, just risen with a most dreadful head-ach, occasioned by drinking miserable wine, to the health of the fair whom I attended last night to the play. I do love to lead in a celebrated beauty about the middle of the first act—Every eye is cast on us. The women almost burst with envy, and the men curse the lucky fellow. Such was my case last night, as St. Laurence could not go with us, having a packet to make up for Castle Howard, though he promised to look in before it was over. In the middle of the fourth act, after having shed abundance of tears, her Ladyship's sensibility was wound up too high by the inimitable Siddons, and she fainted away in my arms, who sat directly behind her, and happily caught her from falling. Every body lent assistance, and she was soon recovered.

recovered. I advised her immediately to go home, and left her in the care of the two Lady Ormonds, (who were of our party) whilst I got up the coach. She was quite recovered by the air before we arrived at her house. I then left her in the care of the women, and returned to the theatre, when I was surrounded by all my acquaintance to inquire after my charge, and to congratulate me. One said, what he would give to have been in my place: another said, what he would give to have been in my place: another said, Dillon is always lucky. Every one had something to say on the subject.—I then (the play being concluded) proposed to adjourn to a neighbouring tavern, and drink a bumper or two to the recovery of her Ladyship's health, which we did, and it was five o'clock this morning before we parted. You know

I drink

I drink but very little ; therefore, with the addition of execrable wine, you may guess what state I am in at this moment. Johnson is just returned, whom I dispatched with inquiries to Portland Place. He brings me a note from St. Laurence, saying they are just stepping into their carriage for the country, where they expect to see me. After my return you shall hear again from

Yours,

HARRY DILLON.

END OF VOL. I.



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